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THE

TRAGEDY

OF

SOPHONISBA.

Acted at the

THEATRE-ROYAL

IN

DRURTLANE.

By his MAJESTY's Servants.

---

By Mr. THOMSON.

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DUBLIN:

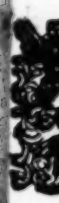
Printed by S. POWELL,

For GEORGE RISK, at the *Shakespear's Head*,  
GEORGE EWING, at the *Angel and Bible*, And  
WILLIAM SMITH, at the *Hercules*, Bookellers in  
Dame's-street, MDCCLXXX.

Y G E D Y



R B L



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TO THE  
QUEEN.

MADAM,

**T**HE notice, Your MAJESTY  
has condescended to take of the  
following *Tragedy*, emboldens  
me to lay it, in the humblest  
manner, at Your MAJESTY'S  
Feet. And to whom can this illustrious  
*Carthaginian* so properly fly for protection,  
as to a QUEEN, who commands the hearts  
of a *People*, more powerful at Sea than  
*Carthage*? more flourishing in *commerce*  
than those *first Merchants*? more secure a-  
gainst

# DEDICATION.

gainst conquest? and, under a *Monarchy*,  
more free than a *Common-wealth* itself?

I dare not, nor indeed need I, here attempt a character, where both the great and the amiable qualities shine forth in full perfection. All words are faint to speak what is universally felt, and acknowledged, by a happy people. Permit me therefore only to subscribe my self, with the truest zeal and veneration,

MADAM,

Your MAJESTY'S

*Most humble,*

*Most dutiful,*

*And most devoted*

*Servant,*

JAMES THOMSON.



---

# P R E F A C E.

**I**T is not my intention, in this preface, to defend any faults that may be found in the following piece. I am afraid there are too many: But those who are best able to discover, will be most ready to pardon them. They alone know how difficult an undertaking the writing of a tragedy is: And this is a first attempt.

I beg leave only to mention the reason that determined me to make choice of this subject. What pleased me particularly, tho' perhaps it will not be least liable to objection with ordinary readers, was the great simplicity of the story. It is one, regular, and uniform, not charged with a multiplicity of incidents, and yet affording several revolutions of fortune, by which the passions may be excited, varied, and driven to their full tumult of emotion.

This unity of design was always sought after, and admired by the antients: and the most eminent among the moderns, who understood their writings, have chosen to imitate them in this, from an intire conviction that the reason of it must hold good in all ages. And here allow me to translate a passage from the celebrated Monsieur Racine, which contains all that I have to say on this head.

“ We must not fancy that this rule has no other foundation but the caprice of those who made it. Nothing can touch us in tragedy, but what is probable. And what probability is there, that, in one Day, should happen a multitude of things, which could scarce happen in several Weeks? There are some who think that this simplicity is a mark of barrenness of invention. But they do not consider, that, on the contrary, invention consists in making something out of nothing: and that this huddle of incidents has always been the refuge of poets, who did not find in their genius either richness or force enough to engage their spectators, for five acts together, by a simple

## P R E F A C E.

"*action, supported by the violence of passions, the beauty of sentiments, and the nobleness of expression.*" — I would not be understood to mean that all these things are to be found in my performance: I only shew the reader what I aimed at, and how I would have pleased him, had it been in my power.

As to the character of Sophonisba; in drawing it, I have confined myself to the truth of history. It were an affront to the age, to suppose such a character out of nature; especially in a country which has produced so many great examples of public spirit and heroic virtues, even in the softer sex: and I had destroyed her character intirely, had I not marked it with that strong love to her country, disdain of servitude, and inborn aversion to the Romans, by which all historians have distinguished her. Nor ought her marrying Masinissa, while her former husband was still alive, to be reckoned a blemish in her character. For, by the laws both of Rome and Carthage, the captivity of the husband dissolved the marriage of course; as among us impotence, or adultery: not to mention the reasons of a moral and public nature, which I have put into her own mouth in the scene betwixt her and Syphax.

This is all I have to say of the play itself. But I cannot conclude without owning my obligations to those concerned in the representation. They have indeed done me more than justice. Whatever was designed as amiable and engaging in Masinissa shines out in Mr. Wilks's action. Mrs. Oldfield, in the character of Sophonisba, has excelled what even in the fondness of an author, I could either wish or imagine. The grace, dignity, and happy variety of her action have been universally applauded, and are truly admirable.

P R O

# PROLOGUE.

By a FRIEND.

Spoken by Mr. WILLIAMS.

WHEN learning, after the long Gothic night,  
Fair, o'er the western world, renew'd his light,  
With arts arising Sophonisba rose:  
The tragic muse, returning, wapt her woes.  
With her th' Italian scene first learnt to glow;  
And the first tears for her were taught to flow.  
Her charms the Gallic muses next inspir'd;  
Corneille himself saw, wonder'd, and was fir'd.

What foreign theatres with pride have shewn,  
Britain, by juster title, makes her own.  
When freedom is the cause, 'tis hers to fight;  
And hers, when freedom is the theme, to write.  
For this, a British Author bids again  
The heroine rise, to grace the British scene.  
Here, as in life, she breathes her genuine flame:  
She asks what bosom has not felt the same?  
Asks of the British Youth—Is silence there?  
She dares to ask it of the British Fair.

To-night, our home-spun author would be true,  
'At once, to nature, history, and you.  
Well-pleas'd to give our neighbours due applause,  
He owns their learning, but disdains their laws,  
Not to his patient touch, or happy flame,  
'Tis to his British heart he trusts for fame,  
If France excel him in one free-born thought,  
The man, as well as poet, is in fault.

Nature! informer of the poet's art,  
Whose force alone can raise or melt the heart,  
Thou art his guide; each passion, every line,  
Whate'er he draws to please, must all be thine,  
Be thou his judge: in every candid breast,  
Thy silens whisper is the sacred test.

# The Persons represented.

*Masinissa*, King of *Maffylia*,

Mr. Wilks,

*Syphax*, King of *Maffylia*,

Mr. Mills.

*Narva*, Friend to *Masinissa*,

Mr. Roberts.

*Scipio*, the Roman General,

Mr. Williams.

*Lalius*, his Lieutenant,

Mr. Bridgewater.

*Sophonisba*,

Mrs. Oldfield.

*Phænissa*, her Friend,

Mrs. Roberts.

Messenger, Slave, Guards, and Attendants.

SCENE, The Palace of *CIRTHA*.

SOPHO.

Sop.

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SOPHONISBA,  
*Paul A Maylor*  
TRAGEDY.

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ACT I. SCENE I.

SOPHONISBA, PHOENISSA.

*Sop.* **T**HIS hour, *Phœnissa*, this important  
hour,

Or fixes me a queen, or from a throne  
Throws *Sophonisba* into *Roman* chains.

Detested thought! For now his utmost force  
Collected, desperate, distress'd, and sore  
From battles lost; with all the rage of war,  
Ill-fated *Syphax* makes his last effort.

But say, thou partner of my hopes and fears,  
*Phœnissa*, say; while, from the lofty tower,  
Our straining eyes the field of battle sought,  
Ah, thought you not that our *Numidian* troops  
Gave up the broken field, and scattering fled,

Wild

Wild o'er the hills, from the rapacious sons  
Of still triumphant Rome.

*Phæ.* The dream of care!

And think not, madam, *Syphax* can resign,  
But with his ebbing life, in this last field,  
A crown, a kingdom, and a queen he loves  
Beyond Ambition's brightest wish; for whom,  
Nor mov'd by threats, nor bound by plighted faith,  
He scorn'd the *Roman* friendship (that fair name  
For slavery) and from the engagements broke  
Of *Scipio*, fam'd for every winning art,  
The towering genius of recover'd Rome.

*Soph.* Oh name him not! These *Romans* stir my blood  
To too much rage. I cannot bear the fortune  
Of that proud people.— Said you not, *Phænissa*,  
That *Syphax* lov'd me; which would fire his battle,  
And urge him on to death or conquest? True,  
He loves me with the madness of desire;  
His every passion is a slave to love;  
Nor heeds he danger where I bid him go,  
Nor leagues, nor interest. Hence these endless wars,  
These ravag'd countries, these successful fights,  
Sustain'd for *Carthage*; whose defence alone  
Engag'd my loveless marriage-vows with his.  
But know you not, that in the *Roman* camp  
I have a lover too; a gallant, brave,  
And disappointed lover full of wrath,  
Returning to a kingdom whence the sword  
Of *Syphax* drove him?

*Phæ.* *Masiniſſa*?

*Soph.* He:

Young *Masiniſſa*, the *Massylian* king,  
The first addresser of my youth; for whom  
My bosom felt a fond beginning wish,  
Extinguish'd soon when once to *Scipio's* side  
Won o'er, and dazled by th' enchanting glare  
Of that fair-seeming heroe, he became  
A gay admiring slave, yet knew it not.  
E'er since, my heart has held him in contempt;  
And thrown out each idea of his worth,



That there began to grow : nay had it been  
As all-possess'd, and soft, as her's who sits  
In secret shades, or by the falling stream,  
And wastes her being in unutter'd pangs,  
I would have broke, or cur'd it of its fondness.

*Phœ.* Heroick *Sophonisba* !

*Sop.* No, *Phœnissa* ;

It is not for the daughter of great *Asdrubal*,  
Descended from a long illustrious line  
Of *Carthaginian* heroes, who have oft  
Fill'd *Italy* with terror and dismay,  
And shook the walls of *Rome*, to pine in love,  
Like a deluded maid ; to give her life,  
And heart high-beating in her country's cause,  
Meant not for common aims and household cares,  
To give them up to vain presuming man ;  
Much less to one who stoops the neck to *Rome*,  
An enemy to *Carthage*, *Masinissa*.

*Phœ.* Think not I mean to check that glorious flame,  
That just ambition which exalts your soul,  
Fires on your cheek, and lightens in your eye.  
Yet would he had been yours ! this rising prince,  
For, trust me, fame is fond of *Masinissa*.  
His various fortune, his resplendent deeds,  
His courage, conduct, deep-experienc'd youth,  
And vast unbroken spirit in distress,  
Still rising stronger from the last defeat,  
Are all the talk and terror too of *Afric*.

Who has not heard the story of his woes ?  
How hard he came to his paternal reign ;  
Whence soon by *Syphax*' unrelenting hate,  
And jealous *Carthage* driven, he with a few  
Fled to the mountains. Then, I think, it was,  
Hem'd in a circle of impending rocks,  
That all his followers fell, save fifty horse ;  
Who, thence escap'd thro' secret paths abrupt,  
Gain'd the *Clupean* plain. There overtook,  
And urg'd by fierce surrounding foes, he burst  
With four alone, sore wounded, thro' their ranks,  
And all amidst a mighty torrent plung'd.

Seiz'd

Seiz'd by the whirling gulph, two sunk; and two,  
 With him obliquely hurried down the stream,  
 Wrought to the farther shore. Th'astonish'd troops  
 Stood check'd, and shivering on the gloomy brink,  
 And deem'd him lost in the devouring flood.  
 Mean time the dauntless, undespairing youth  
 Lay in a cave conceal'd; curing his wounds  
 With mountain-herbs, and on his horses fed:  
 Nor here, even at the lowest ebb of life,  
 Stoop'd his aspiring mind. What need I say,  
 How once again restor'd, and once again  
 Expell'd, among the *Garamantian* hills  
 He since has wander'd, till the *Roman* arm  
 Reviv'd his cause? And who shall reign alone,  
*Syphax* or he, this day decides.

*Sop.* Enough.

Thou need'st not blazon thus his fame, *Phœnissa*.  
 Where he as glorious as the pride of woman  
 Could wish, in all her wantonness of thought;  
 The joy of humankind; wise, valiant, good;  
 With every praise, with every laurel crown'd;  
 The warrior's wonder, and the virgin's sigh:  
 Yet this would cloud him o'er, this blemish all;  
 His mean submission to the *Roman* yoke;  
 That, false to *Carthage*, *Afric*, and himself,  
 With proffer'd hand and knee, he hither led  
 These ravagers of earth. — But while we talk,  
 The work of fate goes on; even now perhaps  
 My dying country bleeds in every vein,  
 And the warm victor thunders at our gate.

S C E N E II.

*Sophonisba*, *Phœnissa*, and to them a Messenger from the  
 Battle.

*Soph.* Ha! Whence art thou? Speak, tho' thy bleeding  
 wounds

Might well excuse thy tongue.

*Mes.* Madam, escap'd,  
 With much ado, from yon wide death —

*Soph.* No more.

At once thy meaning flashes o'er my soul.



# S O P H O N I S B A.

Oh all my vanish'd hopes! repairless chance  
Of undiscerning war! — And is all lost?  
An universal havock?

*Mef.* Madam, all.

For scarce a *Masæfylian*, save my self,  
But is or seiz'd, or bites the bloody plain.

The King —

*Soph.* Ah! what of him?

*Mef.* His fiery steed,

By *Masiniſſa*, the *Maffylvian* prince,  
Pierc'd, threw him headlong to his cluſtring foes;  
And now he comes in chains.

*Soph.* 'Tis wond'rous fit,  
Absolute gods! All *Afric* is in chains!  
The weeping world in chains! — Oh is there not  
A time, a righteous time, reserv'd in fate,  
When these oppressors of mankind shall feel  
The miseries they give; and blindly fight  
For their own fetters too? — The conquering troops;  
How points their motion?

*Mef.* At my heels they came,  
Loud-shouting, dreadful, in a cloud of dust,  
By *Masiniſſa* headed.

*Soph.* Hark! arriv'd.  
The murmuring crowd rolls frighted to the palace.  
Thou bleed'st to death, poor faithful wretch, away,  
And dress thy wounds, if life be worth thy care;  
Tho' *Rome*, methinks, will lose a slave in thee.  
Would *Sophonisba* were as near the verge  
Of boundless, and immortal liberty!

## S C E N E III.

*Sophonisba, Phœniſſa.*

[*After a Pause.*]

*Sop.* And wherefore not? When liberty is lost,  
Let slaves and cowards live; but in the brave  
It were a treachery to themselves, enough  
To merit chains. And is it fit for me,  
Who in my veins, from *Ajdrubal* deriv'd,  
Hold *Carthaginian* enmity to *Rome*;  
On whom I've lavish'd all my burning soul,  
In everlasting hate; for whose destruction

6 SOPHONISBA.

I sold my joyless youth to *Syphax*'s arms,  
And turn'd him fierce upon them; fit for such  
A native, restless, unrelenting foe,  
To sit down seditiously-pensive, and await  
Th'approaching victor's rage; reserv'd in chains  
To grace his triumph, and become the scorn  
Of every *Roman* dame — Gods! how my soul  
Disdains the thought! and this shall set it free.

[Offers to stab her self.]

*Phœ.* Hold, *Sophonisba*, hold! my friend! my queen!  
For whom alone I live! hold your rash point,  
Nor thro' your guardian bosom stab your country.  
That is our last resort, and always sure.  
The gracious gods are liberal of death;  
To that last blessing lend a thousand ways.  
Think not I'd have you live to drag a chain,  
And walk the triumph of insatiate *Rome*.  
No, by these tears of loyalty and love!  
E're I beheld so vile a sight, this hand  
Should urge the faithful poynard to your heart;  
And glory in the deed: But while hope lives,  
Let not the generous die. 'Tis late before  
The brave despair.

*Sop.* Thou copy of my soul!  
And now my friend indeed! Shew me but hopes;  
One glimpse of hope, and I'll chew my toils;  
Call patience, labour, fortitude again;  
The vext unjoyous day, and sleepless night;  
Nor shrink at danger, any shape of death.  
Shew me the smallest hope! Alas, *Phœnissa*,  
Too kindly confident! Hope lives not here,  
Fled with her sister Liberty beyond  
The *Garamantian* hills, to some steep wild,  
Some undiscover'd country, where the foot  
Of *Roman* cannot come.

*Phœ.* Yes, there she liv'd  
With *Masiniſſa*, wounded, and forlorn;  
Amidst the serpents hiss, and tygers yell.

*Sop.* Why nam'st thou him?

*Phœ.* Madam, in this forgive

# S O P H O N I S B A :

My forward zeal; from him proceeds our hope,  
 Helov'd you once; nor is your form impair'd,  
 Warm'd, and unfolded into stronger charms:  
 Ask his protection from the *Roman* power,  
 You must prevail; for *Sophonisba* sure  
 From *Masiniſſa* cannot ask in vain.

*Sop.* Now, by the prompting genious of my country!  
 I thank thee for the thought. True, there is pain  
 Even in descending thus to beg protection,  
 From that degenerate youth. But oh for thee,  
 My sinking country! and again to gaul  
 This hated *Rome*, what would I not endure?  
 It shall be done, *Phœniſſa*; tho' disgust  
 Choak'd up my struggling meaning, shall be done.

[kneels.]

But here I vow; propitious *Juno*, hear!  
 Could every pomp and every pleasure joyn'd,  
 Love, empire, glory, a whole kneeling world,  
 Unnerve my smallest purpose, and remit  
 That most inveterate enmity I bear  
 The *Roman* state; may *Carthage* smook in ruins;  
*Rome* rise the mistress of Mankind! and I,  
 There an abandon'd slave, drag out a length  
 Of life, in loathsome baseness; and contempt!

This way the trumpet sounds; let us retire.

## S C E N E IV.

*Masiniſſa, Syphax in Chains, Narva, Guards, &c.*

*Syp.* Is there no dungeon in this city? dark,  
 As is my troubled soul? That thus I'm brought  
 To my own palace, to those rooms of state,  
 Wont in another manner to receive me,  
 With other signs of royalty than these.

(looking on his Chains.)

*Mas.* I will not wound thee, nor insult thee, *Syphax*,  
 With a recital of thy tyrant Crimes.  
 A captive here I see thee, fallen below  
 My most revengeful wish; and all the rage,  
 The noble fury that inspir'd this morn  
 Is sunk to soft compassion. In the field,  
 The flaming front of war, there is the scene

8 S O P H O N I S B A.

Of brave revenge ; and I have sought thee there,  
Keen as the hunted lyon seeks his toe.  
But when a broken enemy, disarm'd,  
And helpless lies ; a falling sword, an eye  
With pity flowing, and an arm as weak  
As infant softness, then becomes the brave.

Now sleeps the sword ; the passions of the field  
Subside to peace ; and my relenting soul  
Melts at thy fate.

*Syp.* This, this, is all I dread,  
All I detest, this insolence refin'd,  
This barbarous pity, this affected goodness,  
Pitied by thee ! — Is there a form of death,  
Of torture, and of infamy like that ?  
It kills my very soul ! — Ye partial gods !  
I feel your worst ; why should I fear you more ?

Hear me, vain youth ! take notice — I abhor  
Thy mercy, loath it. — Poison to my thoughts !  
Wouldst thou be merciful ? One way alone  
Thou canst oblige me. — Use me like a slave ;  
As I would thee, (delicious thought ! ) wert thou  
Here crouching in my power.

*Mas.* Outragious man !  
If that is mercy, I'll be cruel still.  
Nor canst thou drive me, by thy bitterest rage,  
To an unmanly deed ; not all thy wrongs,  
Nor this worse triumph in them.

*Syp.* Ha ! ha ! wrongs ?  
I cannot wrong thee. When we lanch the spear  
Into the monster's heart, to crush the serpent ;  
Destroy what in antipathy we hold,  
The common foe ; can that be call'd a wrong ?  
Injurious that ? Absurd ! it cannot be.

*Mas.* I'm loth to hurt thee more. — The tyrant works  
Too fierce already in thy rankled breast.  
But since thou seem'st to rank me with thy self,  
With great destroyers, with perfidious kings ;  
I must reply to thy licentious tongue,  
Bid thee remember, whose accursed sword  
Began this work of death ; who broke the ties,

# S O P H O N I S B A :

The Holy ties, attested by the gods,  
Which bind the nations in the bond of peace;  
Who meanly took advantage of my youth,  
Unskill'd in arms, unsettled on my throne,  
And drove me to the desert, there to dwell  
With kinder Monsters; who my cities sack'd,  
My country pillag'd, and my subjects murder'd;  
Who still pursu'd me with inveterate hate,  
When generous force prov'd vain, with ruffian arts,  
The villain's dagger, base assassination,  
And for no reason all. Brute violence  
Alone thy plea. — What the least provocation,  
Say, canst thou but pretend?

*Syp.* I needed none.

*Nature* has in my being sown the seeds  
Of enmity to thine. — Nay mark me this.  
Couldst thou restore me to my former state,  
Strike off these chains, give me the sword again,  
The sceptre, and the wide-obedient war:  
Yet must I still, implacable to thee,  
Seek eagerly thy death, or die my self.  
Life cannot hold us both! — Unequal gods!  
Who love to disappoint mankind, and take  
All Vengeance to your selves; why to the point  
Of my long-flatter'd wishes did ye list me,  
Then sink me thus so low? Just as I drew  
The glorious stroke that was to make me happy,  
Why did you blast my strong extended arm?  
Strike the dry sword unsated to the ground?  
But that to mock us is your cruel sport?  
What else is human life?

*Maf.* Thus always join'd  
With an inhuman heart, and brutal manners,  
Is irreligion to the ruling gods;  
Whose schemes our peevish ignorance arraigns,  
Our thoughtless pride. — Thy lost condition, *Syphax*,  
Is nothing to the tumult of thy breast.  
There lies the sting of evil, there the drop  
That poisons nature. — Ye mysterious powers!  
Whose ways are ever-gracious, ever-just,

As ye think wisest, best, dispose of me;  
 But, whether thro' your gloomy depths I wander,  
 Or on your mountains walk; give me the calm,  
 The steady, smiling soul; where wisdom sheds  
 Eternal sunshine and eternal joy.

Then, if mistfortune comes, she brings along  
 The bravest virtues. And so many great  
 Illustrious spirits have convers'd with woe,  
 (The pride of adverse fate!) as are enough  
 To consecrate distress, and make even death  
 Ambition.

*Syp.* Torture! Racks! The common trick  
 Of insolent success, unsuffering pride,  
 This prate of patience, and I know not what.  
 'Tis all a lie, impracticable rant;  
 And only tends to make me scorn thee more.

But why this talk? In mercy send me hence;  
 Yet — ere I go — Oh save me from distraction!  
 I know, hot youth, thou burnest for my queen;  
 But by the majesty of ruin'd kings,  
 And that commanding glory which surrounds her,  
 I charge thee touch her not!

*Mas.* No, *Syphax*, no,  
 Thou need'st not charge me. That were mean indeed,  
 A triumph that to thee. But could I stoop  
 Again to love her; Thou, what right hast thou,  
 A captive, to her bed? Nor life, nor queen,  
 Nor ought, a captive has. All laws in this,  
*Roman* and *Carthaginian*, all agree.

*Syp.* Here, here, begins the bitterness of death!  
 Here my chains grind me first!

*Mas.* Poor *Sophonisba*!  
 She too becomes the prize of conquering *Rome*;  
 What most her heart abhors. Alas, how hard  
 Will slavery sit on her exalted soul!  
 How piteous hard! But, if I know her well,  
 She never will endure it, she will die.  
 For not a *Roman* burns with nobler ardor,  
 A higher sense of liberty than she;  
 And tho' she marry'd thee, her only stain;



# S O P H O N I S B A. 11

False to my youth, and faithless to my vows;  
Yet, I must own it, from a worthy cause,  
From publick spirit did her fault proceed.

*Syp.* Blue plagues, and poison on thy meddling tongue!  
Talk not of her; for every word of her  
Is a keen dagger, griding thro' my heart.

Oh, for a lonely dungeon! where I rather  
Would talk with my own groans, and great revenge,  
Than in the mansions of the blest with thee.

Hell! Whither must I go?

*Mas.* Unhappy man!

And is thy breast determin'd against peace,  
On comfort shut?

*Syp.* On all, but death, from thee.

*Mas.* *Narva*, be *Syphax* thy peculiar care;  
And use him well with tenderness and honour.  
This evening *Lelius*, and to morrow *Scipio*,  
To *Cirthea* come. Then let the *Romans* take  
Their prisoner.

*Syp.* There shines a gleam of hope  
Across the gloom — From thee deliver'd — Ease  
Breathes in that thought — Lead on — My heart grows  
lighter!

## S C E N E V.

*Masiniſſa alone.*

What dreadful havoc in the human breast  
The passions make, when unconfin'd, and mad,  
They burst, unguided by the mental eye,  
The light of reason; which in various ways  
Points them to good, or turns them back from ill.

O save me from the tumult of the soul!  
From the wild beasts within! — For circling sands,  
When the swift whirlwind whelms them o'er the lands;  
The roaring deeps that to the clouds arise,  
While thwarting thick the mingled lightning flies;  
The monster-brood to which this land gives birth,  
The blazing city, and the gaping earth;  
All deaths, all tortures, in one pang combin'd,  
Are gentle to the tempest of the mind.

## ACT II. SCENE I.

Masiniſſa, Narva.

*Maf.* ————— 'Tis true, my friend,  
Thou good old man, by whom my youth was form'd,  
The firm companion of my various life,  
I own, 'tis true, that *Sophonisba's* image  
Lives in my boſom ſtill; and at each glance  
I take in ſecret of the bright idea,  
A ſtrange diſorder ſeizes on my ſoul,  
Which burns with ſtronger glory. Need I ſay,  
How once ſhe had my vows? Till *Scipio* came,  
Reſiſtleſs man! like a deſcending God,  
And ſnatch'd me from the *Carthaginian* ſide  
To nobler *Rome*; beneath whoſe laurel'd brow,  
And ample eye, the nations grow polite,  
Human and happy. Then thou may'ſt remember,  
Such is this woman's high impetuous ſpirit,  
That all-controuling love ſhe bears her country,  
Her *Carthage*; that at this ſhe ſacrific'd  
To *Siphax*, unbelov'd, her blooming Years,  
And won him off from *Rome*.

*Nar.* My generous prince!  
Applauding *Aſric* of thy choice approves.  
Fame claps her wings, and virtue ſmiles on thee,  
Of peace thou ſoftner, and thou ſoul of war!  
But oh beware of that fair foe to glory,  
Woman! and moſt of *Carthaginian* woman!  
Who has not heard of fatal *Punic* guile?  
Of their ſly conqueſts? their inſidious leagues?  
Their *Aſdrubals*? their *Hannibals*? with all  
Their wily heroes? And, if ſuch their men,  
What muſt their women be?

*Maf.* You make me ſmile.  
I thank thy honeſt zeal. But never dread  
The firmneſs of my heart, my ſtrong attachment,  
Severe to *Rome*, to *Scipio*, and to Glory.

Index



Indeed, I cannot, would not quite forget  
 The grace of *Sophonisba*; how she look'd,  
 And talk'd, and mov'd, a *Pallas*, or a *Juno*!  
 Accomplish'd even in trifles, when she stoop'd  
 Ambition's flight, and with a soften'd eye  
 Gave her quick spirit into gayer life.  
 Then every word was liveliness, and wit;  
 We heard the Muses' song; and the dance swam  
 Thro' all the maze of harmony. I flatter not,  
 Believe me, *Narva*; yet my panting soul,  
 To *Scipio* taken in the fair pursuit  
 Of fame, and for my people's happiness,  
 Resign'd this *Sophonisba*; and tho' now  
 Constrain'd by soft necessity to see her,  
 And she a captive in my power, will still  
 Resign her.

*Nar.* Let me not doubt thy fortitude,  
 My *Masissa*, thy exalted purpose  
 Not to be lost in love; but ah! we know not,  
 Oft, till experience sighs it to the soul,  
 The boundless witchcraft of ensnaring woman,  
 And our own slippery hearts. From *Scipio* learn  
 The temperance of heroes. I'll recount  
 Th' instructive story, what these eyes beheld;  
 Perhaps you've heard it; but 'tis pleasing still,  
 Tho' told a thousand times.

*Mas.* I burn to hear it.  
 Lost by my late misfortunes in the desert,  
 I liv'd a stranger to the voice of fame,  
 To *Scipio*'s last exploits. Exalt me now.  
 Great actions raise the mind. But when a friend,  
 A *Scipio* does them; then with more than wonder;  
 Even with a sort of vanity we listen.

*Nar.* When to his glorious, first essay in war,  
 New *Carthage* fell; there all the flower of *Spain*  
 Were kept in hostage; a full field presenting  
 For *Scipio*'s generosity to shine.

And then it was, that when the hero heard  
 How I to thee belong'd, he with large gifts,  
 And friendly words dismiss'd me.

*Maf.* I remember.

And in his favour that impress'd me first.  
But to thy story.

*Nar.* What with admiration  
Struck every heart, was this—A noble virgin,  
Conspicuous far o'er all the captive dames,  
Was mark'd the general's prize. She wept, and blush'd,  
Young, fresh, and blooming like the morn. An eye,  
As when the blue sky trembles thro' a cloud  
Of purest white. A secret charm combin'd  
Her features, and infus'd enchantment thro' them.  
Her shape was harmony.—But eloquence  
Beneath her beauty fails; which seem'd, on purpose,  
Pour'd out by lavish nature, that mankind  
Might see this action in its highest lustre.  
Soft, as she pass'd along, with downcast eyes,  
Where gentle sorrow swell'd, and now and then  
Dropt o'er her modest cheek a trickling tear;  
The *Roman* legions languish'd; and hard war  
Felt more than pity. Even *Scipio's* self,  
As on his high tribunal rais'd he sat,  
Turn'd from the piercing sight, and chiding ask'd  
His Officers, it by this gift they meant  
To cloud his glory in its very dawn.

*Maf.* Oh Gods! my fluttering heart! On, stop not  
*Narva.*

*Nar.* She question'd of her birth, in trembling accents,  
With tears and blushes broken, told her tale.  
But when he found her royally descended,  
Of her old captive parents the sole joy;  
And that a hapless *Celtiberian* prince,  
Her lover and belov'd, forgot his chains,  
His lost dominions, and for her alone  
Wept out his tender soul; sudden the heart  
Of this young, conquering, loving, godlike *Roman*!  
Felt all the great divinity of virtue.  
His wishing youth stood check'd, his tempting power,  
By infinite humanity—

*Maf.* Well, well;  
And then!

*Narv.*

# S O P H O N I S B A.

*Nar.* Disdaining guilty doubt, at once  
 He for her parents and her lover call'd.  
 The various scene imagine: how his troops  
 Look'd dubious on, and wonder'd what he meant;  
 While stretch'd below the trembling suppliants lay,  
 Rack'd by a thousand mingling passions, fear,  
 Hope, jealousy, disdain, submission, grief,  
 Anxiety, and love in every shape.  
 To these as different sentiments succeeded,  
 As mixt emotions, when the man divine  
 Thus the dread silence to the lover broke.  
 " We both are young, both charm'd. The right of war  
 " Has put thy beauteous mistress in my power;  
 " With whom I could, in the most sacred ties,  
 " Live out a happy life: but know that *Romans*  
 " Their hearts as well as enemies can conquer.  
 " Then take her to thy soul; and with her take  
 " Thy liberty and kingdom. In return  
 " I ask but this. When you behold these eyes,  
 " These charms, with transport; be a friend to *Rome*.

*Mas.* There spoke the soul of *Scipio*.—But the Lovers?

*Nar.* Joy and extatic wonder held them mute;  
 While the loud camp, and all the clust'ring crowd,  
 That hung around, rang with repeated shouts.  
 Fame took th' alarm, and thro' resounding *Spain*  
 Blew fast the fair report; which, more than arms,  
 Admiring nations to the *Romans* gain'd.

*Mas.* My friend in glory! thy awaken'd prince  
 Springs at thy faithful tale, it fires my soul,  
 And nerves each thought anew; apt oft perhaps,  
 Too much, too much to slacken into love.  
 But now the soft oppression flies; and all  
 My mounting powers expand to deeds like thine.  
 Thou pattern and inspirer of my fame,  
*Scipio*, thou first of men, and best of friends!

What man of soul would live, my *Narva*, breathe  
 This idle-puffing element; and run,  
 Day after day, the still-returning round  
 Of life's mean offices, and sickly joys;  
 But in compassion to mankind? to be

A guardian God below? to dissipate  
 An ardent being in heroick aims?  
 Do something vastly great like what you told?  
 Something to raise him o'er the groveling herd,  
 And make him shine for ever?— Oh, my friend!  
 Bleed every vein about me; every nerve  
 With anguish tremble; every sinew ake;  
 Be toil familiar to my Limbs; ambition  
 Mix all my thoughts in an incessant whirl;  
 The third time may I lose my kingdom; and again  
 Wander the false inhospitable Syrts;  
 Yet oh, ye liberal Gods! in rich award,  
 And amplest recompence— I ask no more—  
 Share me the wreath of fame from *Scipio's* brow!  
 But see, she comes! mark her majestic port.

## S C E N E II.

*Masiniſſa, Sophonisba, Narva, Phœniſſa.*

*Soph.* Behold, victorious prince! the scene revers'd;  
 And *Sophonisba* kneeling here; a captive,  
 O'er whom the Gods, thy Fortune, and thy Virtue,  
 Have given unquestion'd power of life and death,  
 If such a one may raise her suppliant voice,  
 Once musick to thy ear; if she may touch  
 Thy knee, thy purple, and thy victor-hand;  
 Oh listen, *Masiniſſa*! Let thy soul  
 Intensely listen! While I fervent pray,  
 And strong adjure thee, by that regal state,  
 In which with equal pomp we lately shone!  
 By the *Numidian* name, our common boast!  
 And by those household gods! who may, I wish,  
 With better omens take thee to this palace,  
 Than *Syphax* hence they sent. As is thy pleasure,  
 In all beside determine of my fate.  
 This, this alone I beg. Never, oh never!  
 Into the cruel, proud, and hated power  
 Of *Romans* let me fall. Since angry heaven  
 Will have it so, that I must be a slave,  
 And that a galling chain must bind these hands;  
 It were some little softning in my doom,  
 To call a kindred son of the same clime,

A Native of *Numidia*, my lord.

But if thou canst not save me from the *Romans*,

If this sad favour be beyond thy power;

At least to give me death is what thou canst.

Here strike— My naked bosom courts thy sword;

And my last breath shall bless thee, *Masiniſſa*!

*Mas.* Rise, *Sophonisba*, rise. To see thee thus

Is a revenge I scorn; and all the man

Within me, though much injur'd by thy pride,

And spirit too tempestuous for thy sex,

Yet blushes to behold thus at my feet,

Thus prostrate low, her, for whom kings have kneel'd,

The fairest, but the falsest of her sex.

*Soph.* Spare thy reproach—'Tis cruel thus to lose

In rankling discord, and ungenerous strife,

The few remaining moments that divide me

From the last evil, bondage—*Roman* bondage!

Yes, shut thy heart against me; shut thy heart

Against compassion, every human thought,

Even recollected love: yet know, rash Youth!

That when thou seest me I well their lofty triumph,

Thou seest thy self in me. This is my day;

To-morrow may be thine. But here, assur'd,

Here will I lie on this vile earth, forlorn,

Of hope abandon'd, since despis'd by thee;

Those locks all loose and sordid in the dust;

This sullied bosom growing to the ground,

Scorch'd up with anguish, and of every shape

Of misery full: till comes the soldier fierce

From recent blood, and, in thy very eye,

Lays raging his rude sanguinary grails

On these weak limbs; and clinches them in chains.

Then if no friendly steel, no nectar'd draught

Of deadly poison, can enlarge my soul;

It will indignant burst from a slave's body;

And, join'd to mighty *Dido*, scorn ye all.

*Mas.* Oh *Sophonisba*! 'tis not safe to hear thee;

And I mistook my Heart, to trust it thus.

Hence let me fly.

*Soph.* You shall not, *Masiniſſa*!

Her



Here will I hold you, tremble here for ever;  
 Here unremitting grow, till you consent,  
 And can'st thou think, oh! can'st thou think to leave me?  
 Expos'd, defenceless, wretched, here alone?  
 A prey to *Romans* flush'd with blood and conquest?  
 The subject of their scorn or baser Love?  
 Sure *Masiniſſa* cannot; and, tho' chang'd,  
 Tho' cold as that averted look he wears;  
 Sure love can ne'er in generous breasts be lost  
 To that degree, as not from shame and outrage  
 To save what once they lov'd.

*Maf.* Enchantment! Madness!  
 What would'st thou, *Sophonisba*?—O my heart!  
 My treacherous heart!

*Soph.* What would I, *Masiniſſa*?  
 My mean request sits blushing on my cheek.  
 To be thy slave, young prince, is what I beg;  
 Here *Sophonisba* kneels to be thy slave;  
 Yet kneels in vain. But thou'rt a slave thy self,  
 And canst not from the *Romans* save one woman;  
 Her, who was once the triumph of thy Soul;  
 E'er they seduc'd it by their lying glory.  
 Immortal gods! and am I fallen so low?  
 Scorn'd by a lover? by a slave to *Rome*?  
 Nought can be worth this baseness, life, nor empire!  
 I loath me for it — On this kinder earth,  
 Then leave me, leave me, to despair and death!

*Maf.* What means this conflict with almighty Nature?  
 With the whole warring heart?—Rise, quickly rise,  
 In all the conquering majesty of charms,  
 O *Sophonisba*, rise! while here I swear,  
 By the tremendous powers that rule Mankind!  
 By heaven and earth, and hell! by love, and glory!  
 The *Romans* shall not hurt you — *Romans* cannot;  
 For *Rome* is generous as the Gods themselves,  
 And honours, not insults, a generous foe.  
 Yet since you dread them, take this sacred pledge,  
 This Hand of surety, by which kings are bound;  
 By which I hold you mine, and vow to treat you,  
 With all the reverence due to ruin'd state.

With

With all the softness of remembering love,  
All that can sooth thy fate, and make thee happy.

*Soph.* I thank thee, *Masiniſſa*! now the same;  
The same warm youth, exalted, full of soul;  
With whom in happier days I wont to pass  
The sighing hour: while, dawning fair in love,  
All song and sweetness, life sets joyous out;  
Ere the black tempest of ambition roic,  
And drove us different ways.—Thus dress'd in war  
In nodding plumes, o'ercaſt with ſullen thought,  
With purpos'd vengeance dark, I knew thee not;  
But now breaks out the beauteous ſun anew,  
The gay *Numidian* ſhines warn'd me once,  
Whole love was glory.—Vain deas, hence!  
—Long ſince my heart, to nobler paſſions known,  
Has your acquaintance ſcorn'd.

*Mas.* Oh! while you talk,  
Enchanting fair one! my deluded thought  
Runs back to days of love; when fancy ſtill  
Found worlds of beauty, ever riſing new  
To the tranſported eye; when flattering hope  
Form'd endless proſpects of increaſing bliſs;  
And ſtill the credulous heart believ'd them all,  
Even more than love could promiſe.—But the ſcene  
Is full of danger for a tainted eye;  
I muſt not, dare not, will not look that way.  
O hide it, wiſdom, glory, from my view!  
Or in ſweet ruin I ſhall ſink again.

Diſaſter clouds thy cheek; thy colour goes.  
Retire, and from the troubles of the day  
Repoſe thy weary ſoul; worn out with care,  
And rough unhappy thought.

*Soph.* May *Masiniſſa*  
Ne'er want the goodneſs he has ſhewn to me.

## S C E N E III.

*Masiniſſa, Narva.*

*Mas.* The danger's o'er, I've heard the *Syren's* ſong,  
Yet ſtill to glory hold my ſteady courſe.  
I mark'd thy kind concern, thy friendly fears,  
And own them juſt; for ſhe has beauty, *Narva*.

So

So full, so perfect, with so great a soul  
Inform'd, so pointed high with spirit,  
As strikes like lightning from the hand of *Jove*,  
And raises love to glory.

*Nar.* Ah, my Prince!

Too true, it is too true; her fatal charms  
Are powerful, and to *Masiniissa's* heart  
But know the way too well. And art thou sure,  
That the soft poison which within thy veins  
Lay unextinguish'd, is not rous'd anew?  
Is not this moment working thro' my soul?  
Dost thou not love? Confess.

*Mas.* What said my friend,  
Of poison? love? of loving *Sophonisba*?  
Yes, I admire her, wonder at her beauty;  
And he who does not is as dull as earth,  
The cold unanimated form of man,  
E'er lighted up with the celestial fire.  
Where'er she goes still admiration gazes,  
And listens while she talks. Even thou thy self,  
Who saw'st her with the malice of a friend,  
Even thou thy self admir'st her. — Dost thou not?  
Say, speak sincerely.

*Nar.* She has Charms indeed;  
But has she charms like virtue? Tho' majestic;  
Does she command us, is her force like glory?

*Mas.* All glory's in her eye! Perfection thence  
Looks from his throne; and on her ample brow  
Sits majesty. Her features glow with life,  
Warm with heroick soul. Her mien! — she walks,  
As when a towering goddess treads this earth.  
But when her language flows; when such a one  
Descends to sooth, to sigh, to weep, to grasp  
The tottering knee; oh! *Narva, Narva, oh!*  
Expression here is dumb.

*Nar.* Alas! my Lord,  
Is this the talk of sober admiration?  
Are these the sallies of a heart at ease?  
Of *Scipio's* friend? And was it the calm sense  
Of fair perfection, that the while she kneel'd



For what you rashly promis'd, seiz'd your soul;  
 Stole out in secret transports from your eye;  
 That writh'd you groaning round, and shook your frame.

*Mas.* I tell thee once again, too cautious man,  
 That when a woman begs, a matchless woman,  
 A woman once belov'd, a fallen queen,  
 A *Sophonisba*! when she twines her charms  
 Around our soul, and all her power of looks,  
 Of tears, of sighs, of softness, plays upon us;  
 He's more or less than man who can resist her.  
 For me, my stedfast soul approves, nay more,  
 Exults in the protection it has promis'd.  
 And nought, tho' plighted honour did not bind me.  
 Shall shake the happy purpose of my heart;  
 Nought, by th' avenging gods! who heard my vow,  
 And hear me now again.

*Nar.* And was it then  
 For this you conquer'd?

*Mas.* Yes, and triumph in it.  
 This was my fondest wish; the very point,  
 The plume of glory, the delicious prize  
 Of bleeding years. And I had been a brute,  
 A greater monster than *Numidia* breeds,  
 A horror to my self; if on the ground,  
 Cast vilely from me, I th' illustrious fair one  
 Had left to bondage, bitterness, and death.  
 Nor is there ought in war worth what I feel;  
 In pomp and hollow state, like this sweet sense  
 Of infelt bliss; which the reflection gives me,  
 Of saving thus such excellence and beauty  
 From her supreme abhorrence.

*Nar. Masinissa,*  
 My friend! my royal lord! alas! you slide,  
 You sink from virtue. On the giddy brink  
 Of fate you stand — One step, and all is lost!

*Mas.* No more, no more! if this is being lost,  
 If this, mistaken! is forsaking virtue,  
 And rushing down the precipice of fate;  
 Then down I go, far far beyond the din  
 Of scrupulous dull precaution, — Leave me, *Nar.*

I want to be alone, to find some shade,  
 Some solitary gloom; there to shake off  
 This weight of life, this tumult of mankind,  
 This sick ambition on it felt recoiling;  
 And there to listen to the gentle voice,  
 The sigh of peace, something, I know not what,  
 That whispers transport to my heart. — Farewel.

## SCENE IV.

NARVA alone.

Struck, and he knows it not. — So when the field,  
 Elate in heart, the warrior seems to yield;  
 The streaming blood can scarce convince his eyes;  
 Nor will he feel the wound by which he dies.

## ACT III. SCENE I

Mafiniffa alone.

IN vain I wander thro' the shade for peace;  
 'Tis with the calm alone, the pure of heart,  
 That there the goddess talks — But in my breast  
 Some busy thought, some secret-eating pang,  
 Throbs inexpressible; and roars from — What?  
 From charm to charm, on *Sophonisba* still  
 Earnest, intent, devoted all to her.  
 Oh it must out! — 'Tis love, almighty love!  
 Returning on me with a stronger tide,  
 I'll doubt no more, but give it up to love.  
 Come to my breast, thou rosy-smiling god!  
 Come unconfin'd! bring all thy joys along,  
 All thy soft cares, and mix them copious here.  
 But why invoke I thee? Thy power is weak,  
 To *Sophonisba's* eye, thy quiver poor,  
 To the resistless lightning of her form;  
 And dull thy bare insinuating arts,  
 To the sweet mazes of her flowing tongue,  
 Quick, let me fly to her; and there forget

This

This tedious absence, war, ambition, noise,  
Even friendship's self, the vanity of fame,  
And all but love, for love is more than all!

## SCENE II.

Masiniſſa, Narva.

*Maf.* Welcome again, my friend,— Come nearer,  
*Narva;*

Lend me thine arm, and I will tell thee all,  
Untold my secret heart, whose every pulse  
With *Sophonisba* beats.— Nay hear me out—  
Swift, as I mus'd, the conflagration spread;  
At once too strong, too general, to be quench'd.  
I love, and I approve it, deat upon her,  
Even think these minutes lost I talk with thee.  
Heavens! what emotions have possess'd my soul!  
Snatch'd by a moment into years of passion.

*Nar.* Ah *Masiniſſa!* ———

*Maf.* Argue not against me.

Talk down the circling winds that lift the desert;  
And, touch'd by Heaven, when all the forests blaze,  
Talk down the flame, but not my stronger love.  
I have for love a thousand thousand reasons,  
Dear to the heart, and potent o'er the soul.  
My ready thoughts all rising, restless all,  
Are a perpetual spring of tenderness;  
Oh! *Sophonisba!* *Sophonisba!* oh!

*Nar.* Is this deceitful day then come to nought?  
This day, that set thee on a double throne?  
That gave thee *Syphax* chain'd, thy deadly foe?  
With perfect conquest crown'd thee, perfect glory?  
Is it so soon eclips'd? and does yon sun,  
Yon setting sun, who this fair morning saw thee  
Ride through the ranks of long extended war,  
As radiant as himself; with every glance  
Wheeling the pointed files; and, when the storm  
Began, beheld thee tread the rising surge  
Of battle high, and drive it on the foe;  
Does he now, blushing see thee sunk so weak?  
Caught in a smile? the captive of a look?  
I cannot name it without tears.

*Maf.*

*Maf.* Away!

I'm sick of war, of the destroying trade,  
Smooth'd o'er, and gilded with the name of glory.  
Thou need'st not spread the martial field to me;  
My happier eyes are turn'd another way,  
Behold it not; or, if they do, behold it,  
Shrunk up, far off, a visionary scene;  
As to the waking man appears the dream.

*Narv.* Or rather as realities appear,  
The virtue, pomp, and dignities of life,  
In sick disorder'd dreams.

*Maf.* Think not I scorn  
The task of heroes, when oppression rages,  
And lawless violence confounds the world.  
Who would not bleed with transport for his country,  
Tear every dear relation from his heart,  
And greatly die to make a people happy;  
Ought not to taste of happiness himself,  
And is low-soul'd indeed—But sure, my friend,  
There is a time for love, or life were vile!  
A sickly circle of revolving days,  
Led on by hope, with senseless hurry fill'd,  
And clos'd by disappointment. Round and round,  
Still hope for ever wheels the daily cheat;  
Impudent hope! unjoyous madness all!  
'Till love comes stealing in, with his kind hours,  
His healing lips, his cordial sweets, his cares,  
Infusing joy, his joys ineffable!  
That make the poor account of life complete,  
And justify the Gods.

*Nar.* Mistaken Prince,  
I blame not love, But——

*Maf.* Slander not my passion.  
I've suffer'd thee too far.—Take heed, old man.—  
Love will not bear an accusation, *Narva.*

*Nar.* I'll speak the truth, when truth and friendship  
call,  
Nor fear thy frown unkind.—Thou hast no right  
To *Sophonisba*; she belongs to *Rome*.

# SOPHONISBA. 25

*Mas.* Ha! she belongs to *Rome*.—'Tis true—My thoughts

Where have you wander'd, not to think of this?  
Think e'er I promis'd? e'er I lov'd?—Confusion!  
I know not what I say—I should have lov'd,  
Tho' *Jove* in muttering thunder had forbid it.  
But *Rome* will not refuse so small a boon,  
Whose gifts are kingdoms; *Rome* must grant it sure,  
One captive to my wish, one poor request,  
So small to them, but oh so dear to me!  
Here let my heart confide.

*Nar.* Delusive love!

Thro' what wild projects is the frantick mind  
Beguil'd by thee?—And think'st thou that the *Romans*  
The senators of *Rome*, these gods on earth,  
Wise, steady to the right, severely just,  
All incorrupt, and like eternal fate  
Not to be mov'd, will listen to the sigh  
Of idle love? They, when their country calls,  
Who know no pain, no tenderness, no joy,  
But bid their Children bleed before their eyes;  
That they'll regard the light fantastick pangs  
Of a fond heart? and with thy kingdom give thee  
Their most inveterate foe; from their firm side,  
Like *Syphax*, to delude thee? and the point  
Of their own bounty on themselves to turn?  
Thou canst not hope it sure.—Impossible!

*Mas.* What shall I do?—Be now the friend exerted,  
For love and honour press me; love and honour,  
All that is dear and excellent in life,  
All that or soothes the man or lifts the hero,  
Bind my soul deep.

*Nar.* Rash was your vow, my lord.  
I know not what to counsel.—When you vow'd,  
You vow'd what was not in your power to grant;  
And therefore 'tis not binding.

*Mas.* Never! Never!  
Oh never will I falsify that vow!  
Let then destruction seize me! Yes, ye *Romans*,  
If it be so, there, take your kingdoms back,

C

Your

Your royal gewgaws, all for *Sophonisba*!

Hold,—Let me think a while—It shall be so!  
By all th' inspiring Gods that prompt my thought!  
This very night shall solemnize our vows;  
And the next joyous sun, that visits *Afric*,  
See *Sophonisba* seated on my throne—  
Then if they spare her not,---not spare my queen,---  
Perdition on their stubborn pride call'd virtue!  
Be theirs the world, but *Sophonisba* mine!

*Nar.* And is it possible, ye Gods, that rule us!  
Can *Masiniissa* in his pride of youth,  
In his meridian glory shining wide,  
The light of *Afric*, and the friend of *Scipio*;  
He take a woman to the nuptial bed,  
Who scorn'd him for a tyrant, old, and peevish,  
His rancorous foe? and gave her untouch'd bloom,  
Her spring of charms to *Syphax*?

*Mas.* Horrid friendship!  
This, this, has thrown a serpent to my heart;  
While it o'erflow'd with tenderness, with joy,  
With all the sweetness of exulting love.  
Now nought but gall is there, and burning poison!  
Yes, it was so!—Curse on her vain ambition!  
What had her meddling sex to do with states?  
The Business of men! For him! for *Syphax*!  
Forsook for him! my love for his gross passion!  
The thought is hell!—Oh I had treasur'd up  
A world of indignation, years of scorn;  
But her sad suppliant witchcraft sooth'd it down.  
Where is she now? That it may burst upon her;  
Bear her unbounded from me, down the torrent,  
Far, far away! And tho' my plighted faith,  
Shall save her from the *Romans*, yet to tell her,  
That I will never, never see her more!

Ha! there she comes.---Pernicious fair one!—Leave me

### S C E N E III.

*Sophonisba, Masiniissa.*

*Sop.* Forgive this quick return.—The rage, confusion  
And mingled passions of this luckless day,  
Made me forget another warm request



I had to beg of generous *Masiniſſa*;  
 For oh to whom, ſave to the generous, can  
 The miſerable fly? — But much diſturb'd  
 You look, and ſcowl upon me a denial.  
 Repentance frowns on your contracted brow.  
 Already, weary of my ſinking fate,  
 You ſeem to droop; and for unhappy *Syphax*  
 I ſhall implore in vain.

*Maſ.* For *Syphax*? vengeance!

And canſt thou mention him? Oh grant me breath!

*Sop.* I know, young prince, how deep he has provok'd  
 thee;

How keen he ſought thy youth; thro' what a fire  
 Of great diſtreſs, from which you come the brighter,

On dull indifferent objects, or perhaps  
 Diſlik'd a little, 'tis but common bounty  
 To ſhower relief; but when our bittereſt foe  
 Lies ſunk, diſarm'd, and deſolate, then! then!  
 To feel the mercies of a pitying God,  
 To raiſe him from the duſt, and that beſt way  
 To triumph o'er him, his heroic goodneſs;  
 O let unhappy *Syphax* touch thy heart,  
 Victorious *Masiniſſa*!

*Maſ.* Monſtrous this!

Still doſt thou blaſt me with that curſed name!  
 The very name thy conſcious guilt ſhould ſhun.

Oh had he heap'd all ills upon my head,  
 While it was young, and for the ſtorm unfit;  
 Had he but driven me from my native throne,  
 From regal pomp and and luxury, to dwell  
 Among the foreſt beaſts; to bear the beam  
 Of red *Numidian* ſuns, and the rank dew  
 Of cold unſhelter'd nights; to mix with wolves;  
 To hunt with hungry tygers for my prey,  
 And thirſt with *Dipſas* on the burning ſand;  
 I could have thank'd him for his angry leſſon;  
 The fair occaſion that his rage afforded  
 Of learning patience, fortitude, and hope,  
 Still riſing ſtronger on incumbent fate,  
 And all that try'd humanity can dictate,

But there is one curs'd bitterness behind,  
 One injury, the man can never pardon;  
 That scorches up the tear in pity's eye,  
 And even sweet mercy's self converts to gall.  
 I cannot——will not name it——Heart of anguish!  
 Down! down!

*Sop.* Ah! whence this sudden storm? this madness,  
 That hurries all thy soul?

*Mas.* And dost thou ask?  
 Ask thy own faithless heart; snatch'd from my Vows,  
 From the warm wishes of my springing youth,  
 And given to that old hated monster, *Syphax*.  
 Perfidious *Sophonisba*!

*Sop.* Nay no more.  
 With too much truth I can return thy charge.  
 Why didst thou drive me to that cruel choice?  
 Why leave me, with my country, to destruction?  
 Why break thy love? thy faith? and join the *Romans*?

*Mas.* By heavens! the *Romans* were my better genius  
 Sav'd me from fate; and form'd my youth to glory;  
 But for the *Romans* I had been a savage,  
 A wretch like *Syphax*, a forgotten thing,  
 The tool of *Carthage*.

*Sop.* Meddle not with *Carthage*,  
 Impatient youth, for that I will not bear;  
 Tho' here I were a thousand fold thy slave.  
 Not one base word of *Carthage*——on thy soul!

*Mas.* How vain thy phrenzy! Go, command thy slave  
 Thy fools, thy *Syphaxes*; but I will speak,  
 Speak loud of *Carthage*, call it false, ungenerous,  
 ——Yet shall I check me, since it is thy country?  
 While the *Romans* are the light, the glory——

*Sop.* *Romans*!  
 Perdition on the *Romans*!——and almost  
 On thee too——*Romans* are the scourge  
 Of the red world, destroyers of mankind.  
 The ruffians, ravagers of earth; and all  
 Beneath the smooth dissimulating mask  
 Of justice, and compassion; as if slave  
 Was but another name for civiliz'd.



All vengeance on the *Romans*!—While fair *Carthage*  
 Unblemish'd rises on the base of commerce;  
 And asks of heaven nought but the general winds,  
 And common tides, to carry plenty, joy,  
 Civility, and grandeur, round the world.

*Mas.* No more compare them! for the gods themselves  
 Declare for *Rome*.

*Sop.* It was not always so.

The gods declar'd for *Hannibal*; when *Italy*  
 Blaz'd all around him, all her streams ran blood,  
 All her incarnate vales were vile with death;  
 And when at *Trebia*, *Thrasymene*, and *Canna*,  
 The *Carthaginian* sword with *Roman* blood  
 Was drunk—Oh that he then, on that dread day,  
 While lifeless consternation blacken'd *Rome*,  
 Had raz'd th' accursed city to the ground,  
 And sav'd the world!—When will it come again,  
 A day so glorious, and so big with vengeance,  
 On those my soul abhors?

*Mas.* Avert it heaven!

The *Romans* not enslave, but save the world  
 From *Carthaginian* rage.—

*Sop.* I'll bear no more!

Nor tenderness, nor life, nor liberty,  
 Nothing shall make me bear it.—Perish *Rome*!  
 And all her menial friends!—Yes, rather, rather,  
 Detested as ye are, ye *Romans*, take me,  
 Oh pitying take me to your nobler chains!  
 And save me from this abject youth, your slave!  
 —How canst thou kill me thus?—

*Mas.* I meant it not.

I only meant to tell thee, haughty fair one!  
 How this alone might bind me to the *Romans*;  
 That, in a frail and sliding hour, they snatch'd me  
 From the perdition of thy love; which fell,  
 Like baleful lightning, where I most could wish,  
 And prov'd destruction to my mortal foe.  
 Oh pleasing! fortunate!

*Sop.* I thank them too.

By heavens! for once, I love them; since they turn'd

My better thoughts from thee, thou—But I will not  
Give thee the name, thy mean servility  
From my just scorn deserves.

*Mas.* Oh freely call me,  
By every name thy fury can inspire;  
Enrich me with contempt—I love no more—  
It will not hurt me, *Sophonisba*.—Love,  
Long since I gave it to the passing winds,  
And would not be a lover for the world.  
A lover is the very fool of nature;  
Made sick by his own wantonness of thought,  
His leaver'd fancy: while, to your own charms  
Imputing all, you swell with boundless pride.  
Shame on the wretch! who should be driven from men,  
To live with *Asian* slaves, in one soft herd,  
All wretched, all ridiculous together.

For me, this moment, here I mean to bid  
Farewel, a glad farewel to love and thee.

*Sop.* With all my soul, farewel!—Yet, ere you go,  
Know that my spirit burns as high as thine,  
As high to glory, and as low to love.

Thy promises are void; and I absolve thee,  
Here in the presence of the listening gods.—  
Take thy repented vows—To proud *Cornelia*  
I'd rather be a slave, to *Scipio's* mother;  
Than queen of all *Numidia*, by the favour  
Of him, who dares insult the helpless thus. [*Pause*]

Still dost thou stay? behold me then again,  
Hopeless, and wild, a lost abandon'd slave.  
And now thy brutal purpose must be gain'd.  
Away, thou cruel, and ungenerous, go!

*Mas.* No, not for worlds would I resume my vow!  
Dishonour blast me then! all kind of ills  
Fill up my cup of bitterness, and shame!  
When I resign thee to triumphant *Rome*.

Oh lean not thus dejected to the ground!  
The fight is misery.—What roots me here?

Alas! I have urg'd my foolish heart too far;  
And love depress'd recoils with greater force.  
Oh *Sophonisba*!

*Sop.* By thy pride she dies.

Inhuman prince!

*Maf.* Thine is the conquest, nature!

By heaven and earth! I cannot hold it more.

Wretch that I was! to crush th' unhappy thus;

The fairest too, the dearest of her sex!

For whom my soul could dye! — Turn, quick'y turn,

O *Sophonisba*! my belov'd! my glory!

Turn and forgive the violence of love,

Of love that knows no bounds!

*Sop.* And can it be?

Can that soft passion prove so fierce of heart,

As on the tears of misery, the sighs

Of death, to feast? to torture what it loves?

*Maf.* Yes it can be, thou goddess of my soul!

Whose each emotion is but varied love,

All over love, its powers, its passions, all:

Its anger, indignation, fury, love;

Its pride, disdain, even detestation, love;

And when it, wild, resolves to love no more,

Then is the triumph of excessive love.

Didst thou not mark me? mark the dubious rage,

That tore my heart with anguish while I talk'd?

Thou didst; and must forgive so kind a fault.

What would thy trembling lips?

*Sop.* That I must die.

For such another storm, so much contempt

Thrown out on *Carthage*, so much Praise on *Rome*,

Were worse than death. Why should I longer tire

My weary fate? The most relentless *Roman*

What could he more?

*Maf.* Oh *Sophonisba*, hear!

See me thy suppliant now. Talk not of death.

I have no life but thee. — Alas! Alas!

Hadst thou a little tenderness for me,

The smallest part of what I feel, thou wouldst —

What wouldst thou not forgive? But how indeed

How can I hope it? Yet I from this moment,

Will so devote my being to thy pleasure,

So live alone to gain thee; that thou must,

If there is human nature in thy breast,  
Feel some relenting warmth.

*Sop.* Well, well, 'tis past.

To be inexorable suits not slaves.

*Mas.* Spare, spare that word; it stabs me to the soul;  
My crown, my life, and liberty are thine.

Oh give my passion way! My heart is full,  
Oppress'd by love; and I could number tears,  
With all the dews that sprinkle o'er the morn;  
While thus with thee conversing, thus with thee  
Even happy to distress. — Enough, enough,  
Have we been cheated by the trick of state,  
For *Rome* and *Carthage* suffer'd much too long;  
And led, by gaudy fancies, wander'd far,  
Far from our bliss. But now since met again,  
Since here I hold thee, circle all perfection,  
The prize of life! since fate too presses hard,  
Since *Rome* and slavery drive thee to the brink;  
Let this immediate night exchange our vows,  
Secure my bliss, our future fortunes blend,  
Set thee, the queen of beauty, on my throne,  
And make it doubly mine. — A wretched gift  
To what my love could give!

*Sop.* What? marry thee?

This night?

*Mas.* Thou dear one! yes, this very night;  
Let injur'd *Hymen* have his rights restor'd,  
And bind our broken vows. — Think, serious, think!  
On what I plead. — A thousand reasons urge. —  
Captivity dissolves thy former marriage;  
And if 'tis with the meanest vulgar so,  
Can *Sophonisba* to a slave, to *Syphax*,  
The most exalted of her sex, be bound?  
Besides it is the best, perhaps sole way,  
To save thee from the *Romans*; and must sure  
Bar their pretensions: or if ruin comes,  
To perish with thee is to perish happy.

*Sop.* Yet must I still insist. —

*Mas.* It shall be so.

I know thy purpose; it would plead for *Syphax*.

# S O P H O N I S B A.

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He shall have all, thou dearest! shall have all,  
Crowns, trifles, kingdoms, all again, but thee,  
But thee, thou more than all!

*Sop. (Aside.)* Bear witness heaven!

This is alone for *Carthage*.

(To him.)

Gain'd by goodness,

I may be thine. Expect no love, no fighting.

Perhaps, hereafter, I may learn again

To hold thee dear. If on these terms thou canst,

Here take me, take me, to thy wishes.

*Mas.* Yes,

Yes, *Sophonisba*! as a wretch takes life

From off the bleeding rack.—All wild with joy,

Thus hold thee, press thee, to my bounding heart;

And bless the bounteous Gods.—Can heaven give more?

Oh happy, happy, happy!—Come, my fair,

This ready minute sees thy will perform'd;

From *Syphax* knocks his chains; and I my self,

Even in his favour, will request the *Romans*.

Oh, thou hast smil'd my passions into peace!

So, while conflicting winds embroil'd the Seas,

In perfect bloom, warm with immortal blood,

Young *Venus* rear'd her o'er the raging flood;

She smil'd around, like thine her beauties glow'd;

When smooth, in gentle swells, the surges flow'd;

Sunk, by degrees, into a liquid plain;

And one bright calm sat trembling on the main.

## A C T IV. S C E N E I.

*Sophonisba, Phœnissa.*

*Phœnissa.*

**H**Ail queen of *Masæylia* once again!  
And fair *Massylia* join'd! This rising day  
Saw *Sophonisba*, from the height of life,  
Thrown to the very brink of slavery:

State;



State, honours, armies vanquish'd ; nothing left  
But her own great unconquerable mind.

And yet, ere evening comes, to larger power  
Restor'd, I see my royal friend ; and kneel  
In grateful homage to the Gods, and her.

Ye Powers, what awful changes often mark  
The fortunes of the great !

*Sop. Phœnissa*, true ;

'Tis awful all, the wondrous work of fate.  
But ah ! this sudden marriage damps my soul ;  
I like it not, that wild precipitance  
Of youth, that ardor, that impetuous stream  
In which his love return'd. At first, my friend,  
He vainly rag'd with disappointed love ;  
And, as the hasty storm subsided, then  
To softness varied, to returning fondness,  
To sighs, to tears, to supplicating vows ;  
But all his vows were idle, till at last  
He shook my heart by *Rome*. — To be his queen,  
Could only save me from their horrid power.  
And there is madness in that thought, enough  
In that strong thought alone to make me run  
From nature.

*Phœ.* Was it not auspicious, madam ?  
Just as we hop'd ? just as our wishes plann'd ?  
Nor let your spirit sink. Your serious hours,  
When you behold the *Roman* ravage check'd,  
From their enchantment *Masiniſſa* freed,  
And *Carthage* mistress of the world again,  
This marriage will approve : then will it rise  
In all its glory, virtuous, wise and great,  
While happy nations, then deliver'd, join  
Their loud acclaim. And, had the white occasion  
Neglected flown, where now had been your hopes ?  
Your liberty ? your country ? where your all ;  
Think well of this, think that, think every way,  
And *Sophonisba* cannot but exult  
In what is done.

*Sop.* So may my hopes succeed !  
As love alone to *Carthage*, to the public,



Led me a marriage-victim to the temple,  
 And justifies my vows. — Ha! *Syphax* here!  
 What would his rage with me? — *Phœnissa*, stay.  
 But this one trial more — Heroic truth,  
 Support me now!

## SCENE II.

*Syphax*, *Sophonisba*, *Phœnissa*,

*Syp.* You seem to fly me, madam,  
 To shun my gratulations. — Here I come,  
 To join the general joy; and I, sure I,  
 Who have to dotage, have to ruin lov'd you,  
 Must take a tender part in your success,  
 In your recover'd state,

*Sop.* 'Tis very well.

I thank you, sir.

*Syp.* And gentle *Masmissa*,

Say, will he prove a very coming fool?

All pliant, all devoted to your will?

A glorious wretch like *Syphax*? — Ha! not mov'd!

Speak, thou perfidious! canst thou bear it thus?

With such a steady countenance? canst thou

Here see the man thou hast so grossly wrong'd,

And yet not sink in shame? And yet not shake

In every guilty nerve?

*Sop.* What have I done,

That I should tremble? that I should not dare

To bear thy presence? Was my heart to blame,

I'd tremble for my self, and not for thee,

Proud man! Nor would I live to be ashamed,

My soul it self would die, could the least shame

On her unspotted fame be justly cast;

For of all evils, to the generous, shame

Is the last deadly pang. — But you behold

My late engagement with a jealous, false,

And selfish eye.

*Syp.* Avenging *Juno*, hear!

And canst thou think to justify thy self?

I blush to hear thee, traitress!

*Syp.* O my soul!

Canst thou hear this, this base opprobrious language

And

And yet be tamely calm? — Well, well, for once  
 It shall be so — in pity to thy madness —  
 Impatient spirit down! — Yes, *Syphax*, yes,  
 Yes I will greatly justify my self;  
 Even by the consort of the thundering *Jove*,  
 Who binds the holy marriage-vow, be judg'd,  
 And every public heart, not meanly lost  
 In little low pursuits, to wretched self  
 Not all devoted, will absolve me too.  
 But in the tempest of the soul, when rage,  
 Loud indignation, unattending pride,  
 And jealousy confounded it, how can then  
 The nobler passions, how can they be heard?  
 Yet let me tell thee —

*Syp.* Thou canst tell me nought.

Away! away! nought but illusion, falsehood —

*Sop.* My heart will burst, in honour to my self,  
 If here I speak not; tho' thy rage, I know,  
 Can never be convinc'd, yet shall it be  
 Confounded. — And must I renounce my freedom?  
 Forgo the power of doing general good?  
 Must yield my self the slave, the barbarous triumph  
 Of insolent, enrag'd, inveterate *Rome*?  
 And all for nothing but to grace thy fall?  
 Nay by my self to perish for thy pleasure?

For thee, the *Romans* may be mild to thee;  
 But I, a *Carthaginian*, I, whose blood  
 Holds unrelenting enmity to theirs;  
 Who have my self much hurt them, and who live  
 Alone to work them woe; what, what can I  
 Hope from their vengeance, but the very dregs  
 Of the worst fate, the bitterness of bondage?  
 Yet thou, thou kind man, wouldst in thy generous love  
 Wouldst have me suffer that; be bound to thee,  
 For that dire end alone, beyond the stretch  
 Of nature, and of law.

*Syp.* Confusion! Law!

I know the laws permit thee, the gross laws  
 That rule the vulgar. I'm a captive, true;  
 And therefore may'st thou plead a shameful right.

To leave me to my chains — But say, thou base one,  
 Ungrateful! say, for whom am I a captive?  
 For whom these many years with war, and death,  
 Defeats, and desolation have I liv'd?  
 For whom has battle after battle bled?  
 For whom my crown, my kingdom, and my all,  
 Been vilely cast away? For whom this day,  
 This very day, have I been stain'd with slaughter?  
 With yon last reeking field? — For one, ye gods!  
 Who leaves me for the victor, for the wretch  
 I hold in utter endless detestation.  
 Fire! fury! hell! — Oh I am richly paid! —  
 But thus it is to love a woman — Woman!  
 The source of all disaster, all perdition!  
 Man in himself is social, would be happy,  
 Too happy; but the gods, to keep him down,  
 Curs'd him with woman! fond, enchanting, smooth,  
 And harmless-seeming woman; while at heart  
 All poison, serpents, tygers, furies, all  
 That is destructive, in one form combin'd,  
 And gilded o'er with beauty!

*Sop.* Hapless man!

I pity thee; this madness only stirs  
 My bosom to compassion, not to rage.  
 Think as you list of our unhappy sex,  
 Too much subjected to your tyrant force;  
 Yet know that all, we were not all, at least,  
 Form'd for your trifles, for your wanton hours.  
 Our passions too can sometimes soar above  
 The household task assign'd us, can expand  
 Beyond the narrow sphere of families.  
 And take in states into the panting heart,  
 As well as yours, ye partial to yourselves!  
 And this is my support, my joy, my glory,  
 The Conscience that my heart abhors all baseness,  
 And of all baseness most ingratitude.

This sure affronted honour may declare,  
 With an unblushing cheek.

*Syp.* False, false as Hell!

False as your sex! when it pretends to virtue.

*You*

You talk of honour, conscience, patriotism.  
 A female patriot! — Vanity! — Absurd!  
 Even doating dull credulity would laugh  
 To scorn your talk. Was ever Woman yet  
 Had any better purpose in her eye,  
 Than how to please her pride or wanton will?  
 In various shapes, and various manners, all,  
 All the same plagues, or open, or conceal'd,  
 The bane of life!

*Sop.* Must I then, must I, *Syphax*,  
 Give thee a bitter proof of what I say?  
 I would not seem to heighten thy distress,  
 Not in the least insult thee; thou art fallen,  
 So fate severe has will'd it, fallen by me.  
 I therefore have been patient; from another,  
 Such language, such indignity, had fir'd  
 My soul to madness. But since driven so far,  
 I must remind thy blind injurious rage  
 Of our unhappy Marriage: —

*Syp.* Horror! — Oh!  
 Blot it eternal night!

*Sop.* Allow me, *Syphax*!  
 Hear me but once! If what I here declare  
 Shines not with reason, and the clearest truth;  
 May I be base, despis'd, and dumb for ever!  
 I pray thee think, when unpropitious *Hymen*  
 Our hands united, how I stood engag'd.  
 I need not mention what full well thou know'st.  
 But pray recal, was I not flatter'd? young?  
 With blooming life elate, with the warm years  
 Of vanity? sunk in a passion too,  
 Which few resign? Yet then I married thee,  
 Because to *Carthage* deem'd a stronger friend;  
 For that alone. On these conditions, say,  
 Didst thou not take me, court me to thy throne?  
 Have I deceiv'd thee since? Have I dissembled?  
 To gain one purpose, e'er pretended what  
 I never felt? Thou canst not say I have.  
 And if that principle, which then inspir'd  
 My marrying thee, was right, it cannot now

Be wrong. Nay since my native city wants  
Assistance more, and sinking calls for aid,  
Must be more right ———

*Syp.* This reasoning is insult!

*Sop.* I'm sorry that thou dost oblige me to it,  
Then in a word take my full-open'd soul.

All love, but that of *Carthage*, I despise.  
I formerly to *Masinissa* thee  
Preferr'd not, nor to thee now *Masinissa*,  
But *Carthage* to you both. And if preferring  
Thousands to one, a whole collected people,  
All nature's tenderness, whate'er is sacred,  
The liberty, the welfare of a state,  
To one man's frantic happiness, be shame;  
Here, *Syphax*, I invoke it on my head!

This set aside; I careless of my self,  
And, scorning prosperous state, had still been thine,  
In all the depth of misery proudly thine!  
But since the public good, the law supreme,  
Forbids it; I will leave thee with a kingdom,  
The same I found thee, or not reign my self.

Alas! I see thee hurt — Why cam'st thou here,  
Thus to inflame thee more?

*Syp.* Why forcerefs? why?  
Thou complication of all deadly mischief!  
Thou lying, soothing, specious, charming fury!  
I'll tell thee why — To breathe my great revenge  
To throw this load of burning madness from me;  
To stab thee!

*Sop.* Ha! ———

*Syp.* — And, springing from thy heart,  
To quench me with thy blood!

(*Phœnissa interposes*)

*Soph.* Off, give me way!

*Phœnissa*; tempt not thou his brutal rage.  
Me, me, he dares not murder: if he dares,  
Here let his fury strike; for I dare die.  
What holds thy trembling point?

*Phœ.* Guards!

*Soph.* Seize the king.

But

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But look you treat him well, with all the state  
His dignity demands.

*Syp.* Goodness from thee  
Is the worst death,—The *Roman* trumpets!—Ha!  
Now I bethink me, *Rome* will do me justice.  
Yes, I shall see thee walk the slave of *Rome*;  
Forget my wrongs; and glut me with the sight.  
Be that my best revenge.

*Soph.* Inhuman! that,  
If there is death in *Afric*, shall not be.

SCENE III.

*Lælius*, *Syphax*.

*Læli.* *Syphax*! alas, how fallen! how chang'd! from  
what

I here beheld thee once in pomp, and splendor,  
At that illustrious interview, when *Rome*  
And *Carthage* met beneath this very roof.  
Their two great generals, *Asdrubal* and *Scipio*,  
To court thy friendship. Of the same repast  
Both gracefully partook, and both reclin'd  
On the same couch: for personal distaste  
And hatred seldom burn between the brave,  
Then the superior virtues of the *Roman*  
Gain'd all thy heart. Even *Asdrubal* himself,  
With admiration struck and just despair,  
Own'd him as dreadful at the social feast  
As in the battle. This thou may'st remember;  
And how thy faith was given before the Gods,  
And sworn and seal'd to *Scipio*; yet how false  
Thou since has prov'd, I need not now recount;  
But let thy Sufferings for thy guilt atone,  
The captive for the king. A *Roman* tongue  
Scorns to pursue the triumph of the sword,  
With mean upbraidings.

*Syp.* *Lælius*, 'tis too true,  
Curse on the cause!

*Læli.* But where is *Masiniſſa*?  
The brave young victor, the *Numidian Roman*!  
Where is he? that my joy, my glad applause,  
From envy pure, may hail his happy state.

Why



Why that contemptuous smile?

*Syp.* Too credulous *Roman*,  
I smile to think how that this *Masiniſſa*,  
This *Rome*-devoted heroe, muſt ſtill more  
Attract thy praifes by a late exploit.  
In every thing ſucceſſful.

*Lal.* What is this?

Theſe publick ſhouts? A ſtrange unuſual joy  
O'er all the captive city blazes wide.  
What wanton riot reigns to night in *Cirthe*?  
Within theſe conquer'd walls?

*Syp.* This, *Lælius*, is  
A night of triumph o'er my conqueror,  
O'er *Masiniſſa*.

*Lal.* *Masiniſſa*! How?

*Syp.* Why he to night is married to my queen?

*Lal.* Impoſſible! —

*Syp.* Yes, ſhe, the fury! ſhe,  
Who put the nuptial torch into my hand,  
That ſet my throne, my palace, and my kingdom,  
All in a blaze — ſhe now has ſeiz'd on him.  
Will turn him ſoon from *Rome* — I know her power,  
Her lips diſtil unconquerable poiſon.  
O glorious thought! — will ſink this hated youth,  
Will cruſh him deep, beneath the mighty ruins  
Of falling *Carthage*.

*Lal.* Can it be? Amazement!

*Syp.* Nay learn it from himſelf. — He comes — Away!  
Ye turies ſnatch me from his ſight! For hell,  
Its tortures all are gentle to the preſence  
Of a triumphantrival?

*Lal.* What is man?

#### SCENE IV.

*Masiniſſa, Lælius.*

*Maſ.* Thou more than partner of this glorious day!  
Which has from *Carthage* torn her chief ſupport,  
And tottering left her, I rejoice to ſee thee —  
To *Cirthe* welcome, *Lælius*. — Thy brave legions  
Now taſte the ſweet repoſe by valour purchas'd;  
This city pours reſreſhment on their toils,

order'd *Narva*——

*Lal.* Thanks to *Masiniſſa*.

All that is well. I here obſerv'd the king,  
But ooſely guarded. True, indeed, from him  
There is not much to fear. The dangerous ſpirit,  
Still not unworthy fear; our matchleſs prize,  
Is his imperious queen, is *Sophonisba*.  
The pride, the rage of *Carthage* live in her.  
How? where is ſhe?

*Maf.* She, *Lalius*? In my care.  
Think not of her. I'll answer for her conduct.

*Lal.* Yes, if in chains. Till then, believe me, prince,  
It were as hopeful answering for the winds,  
That their broad pinions will not rouse the deſart;  
Or that the darted lightning will be harmleſs;  
As promiſe peace from her.—But why ſo dark?  
You ſhift your place, your countenance grows warm,  
It is not uſual this in *Masiniſſa*.

Pray what offence can aſking for the Queen,  
The *Roman* captive give?

*Maf.* *Lalius*, no more.

You know my marriage.—*Syphax* has been buſy——  
It is unkind to dally with my paſſion.

*Lal.* Ah, *Masiniſſa*! was it then for this,  
Thy hurry hiſt her from the recent battle?  
Is the firſt inſtance of the *Roman* bounty  
Thus, thus abuſ'd? They give thee back thy kingdom;  
And in return are of their captive robb'd;  
Of all they valued, *Sophonisba*.——

*Maf.* Robb'd!

How, *Lalius*? Robb'd!

*Lal.* Yes, *Masiniſſa*, robb'd.  
What is it elſe? But I, this very night,  
Will here aſſert the majeſty of *Rome*;  
And, mark me, tear her from the nuptial bed.

*Maf.* Oh Gods! oh patience! As ſoon, fiery *Roman*!  
As ſoon thy rage might from her azure ſphere  
Tear yonder moon——The man who ſeizes her,  
Shall ſet his foot firſt on my bleeding heart.  
Or that be ſure.—And is it thus ye treat

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*Lal.*  
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*Maf.*  
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*Lal.*  
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Thy fir

Yea

Your firm allies? Thus kings in friendship with you?  
Of human passions strip them?—Slaves indeed!  
It thus deny'd the common privilege  
Of nature, what the weakest creatures claim,  
A right to what they love.

*Lal.* Out! out!——For shame!  
This passion makes thee blind. Here is a war;  
Which desolates the nations, has almost  
Laid waste the world. How many widows, orphans;  
And love-lorn virgins pine for it in *Rome*!  
Even her great senate droops; her nobles fail;  
Her *Circus* shrinks; her every *lustre* thins,  
Nature her self, by frequent prodigies,  
Seems at this havock of her works to sicken:  
And our *Ausonian* plains are now become  
A horror to the sight: At each sad step,  
Remembrance weeps. Yet her, the greatest Prize  
It hitherto has yielded; her, whose charms  
Are only turn'd to whet its cruel point;  
Thou to thy wedded breast hast taken her:  
Hast purchas'd thee her beauties by a sea  
Of thy protector's blood; and on a throne  
Set her, this day recover'd by their arms.  
Canst thou thy self, thou, think of it with patience?

Nor to a *Roman* mention King.—A *Roman*  
Would scorn to be a king.—The *Roman* people  
Took liberty from out the very dust,  
And for great ages urg'd it to the skies,  
The dread of kings!

*Maf.* Be not so haughty, *Lal.*  
It scarce becomes the gentle *Scipio's* friend;  
Suits not thy wonted ease, the tender manners  
I still have mark'd in thee. I honour *Rome*;  
But honour too my self, my vows, my queen:  
Nor will, nor can, I tamely hear thee threaten  
To seize her like a slave.

*Lal.* I will be calm.  
This thy rash deed, this unexpected shock,  
Such a peculiar Injury to me,  
Thy friend and fellow-soldier, has perhaps

Snatch'd me too far. For hast thou not dishonour'd,  
By this last action, a successful war?

Our common charge, entrusted us by *Scipio*.

*Mas.* Ay, there it is. — Has not thy vain ambition,  
(Oh where is friendship!) plann'd her for thy triumph?  
To think on't, death! to think it is dishonour.

At such a sight, the warrior's eye might wet  
His burning cheek; and all the *Roman* matrons,  
Who lin'd the laurel'd way, asham'd, and sad,  
Turn from a captive brighter than themselves.  
But *Scipio* will be milder.

*Lal.* I disdain

This thy surmise, and give it up to *Scipio*.  
Those passions are not comely, — Here to-morrow  
Comes the proconsul. Mean time, *Masiniſſa*,  
Ah harden not thy self in flattering hope!  
*Scipio* is mild, but steady. — Ha! the queen.  
I think she hates a *Roman* — and will leave thee.

## S C E N E V.

*Sophonisba, Masiniſſa.*

*Soph.* Was not that *Roman Lalius*, as I enter'd,  
Who parted gloomy hence?

*Mas.* Madam, the same.

*Soph.* Unhappy *Afric*! since these haughty *Romans*  
Have in this lordly manner trod thy Courts,

I read his fresh reproaches in thy face;  
The lesson'd pupil in thy fallen look,  
In that forc'd smile which sickens on thy cheek.

*Mas.* O say not so, thou rapture of my soul!  
For while I see thee, meditate thy charms,  
I smile as cordial as the sun in May;  
Deep from the heart, in every sense of joy  
I fondly smile.

*Soph.* Nay, tell me, *Masiniſſa*;  
How feels their tyranny, when 'tis brought home?  
When, lawless grown, it touches what is dear?  
Pomp for a while may dazzle thoughtless man,  
False glory blind him; but there is a time,  
When ev'n the slave in heart will spurn his chains,  
Nor know submission more. — What said his pride?

*Mas.*

*Mas.* His disappointment for a moment only  
Burst in vain passion, and——

*Soph.* You stood abash'd;  
You bore his threats, and tamely-silent heard him,  
Heard the fierce *Roman* mark me for his triumph.  
Oh bitter!

*Mas.* Banish that unkind suspicion.  
The thought inflam'd my soul, I vow'd my life,  
My last *Massylian* to the sword, ere he  
Shou'd touch thy freedom with the least dishonour,  
But that from *Scipio*——

*Soph. Scipio!*

*Mas.* That from him——

*Soph.* I tell thee, *Masiniſſa*, if from him  
I gain my freedom, from myself conceal it.  
I shall disdain such freedom.

*Mas. Sophonisba!*  
Thou all my heart holds precious! doubt no more.  
Nor *Rome*, nor *Scipio*, nor a world combin'd  
Shall tear thee from me; till out-stretch'd I lie,  
A nameless wretch!

*Soph.* If thy protection fails,  
Of this at least be sure, be very sure,  
To give me timely death.

*Mas.* Cease thus to talk,  
Of death of *Romans*, of unkind ambition.  
My softer thoughts those rugged themes refuse,  
Can turn alone to love.— All, all, but thee,  
All nature is a passing dream to me.  
Fix'd in my view, thou dost for ever shine,  
Thy form forth-beaming from the soul divine.  
A spirit thine, which mortals might adore;  
Despising love, and thence creating more.  
Thou the high passions, I the tender prove,  
Thy heart was form'd for glory, mine for love.

## ACT V. SCENE I.

Masiniſſa, Narva,

*Masiniſſa.*

**H**Ail to the joyous day! With purple clouds,  
The whole horizon glows. The breezy *Spring*  
Stands looſely-floating on the mountain-top,  
And deals her ſweets around. The ſun too ſeems,  
As conſcious of my joy, with brighter eye  
To look abroad the world; and all things ſmile  
Like *Sophonisba*. Love and friendſhip lure  
Have mark'd this day from out their choicest ſtores;  
For beauty rais'd by dignity and virtue,  
With all the graces all the loves embelliſh'd;  
Oh *Sophonisba*'s mine! and *Scipio* comes!

*Narv.* My lord, the trumpets ſpeak his near approach

*Maf.* I want his ſecret audience—Leave us, *Narva*,

## SCENE II.

*Scipio, Masiniſſa.*

*Maf.* *Scipio*! more welcome than my tongue can ſpeak  
Oh greatly, dearly welcome!

*Scipio.* *Masiniſſa*!

My heart beats back thy joy. — A happy friend,  
With laurel green, with conqueſt crown'd, and glory;  
Rais'd by his prudence, fortitude, and valour,  
O'er all his foes; and on his native throne,  
Amidſt his reſcu'd ſhouting ſubjects, ſet:  
Say, can the gods in laſh bounty give  
A ſight more pleaſing?

*Maf.* My great friend! and patron!  
It was thy timely, thy reſtoring arm,  
That brought me from the fearful deſart-life;  
To live again in ſtate, and purple ſplendor.  
And now I wield the ſceptre of my fathers,



See my dear people from the tyrant's scourge,  
 From *Syphax* freed; I hear their glad applauses;  
 And, to compleat my happiness, have gain'd  
 A friend worth all. O gratitude, esteem,  
 And love like mine, with what divine delight  
 Ye fill the heart!

*Scip.* Heroic youth! thy virtue  
 Has earn'd whate'er thy fortune can bestow.  
 It was thy patience, *Masiniſſa*, patience,  
 A champion clad in steel, that in the waste  
 Attended still thy step, and sav'd my friend  
 For better days. What cannot patience do?  
 A great design is seldom snatch'd at once;  
 'Tis patience heaves it on From savage nature,  
 'Tis patience that has built up human life,  
 The nurse of arts! and *Rome* exalts her head  
 An everlasting monument of patience.

*Mas.* If I have that, or any virtue, *Scipio*,  
 'Tis copy'd all from thee.

*Scip.* No *Masiniſſa*,  
 'Tis all unborrow'd, the spontaneous growth  
 Of nature in thy breast.— Friendship for once  
 Must, tho' thou blushest, wear a liberal tongue;  
 Must tell thee, noble youth, that long experience,  
 In councils, battles, many a hard event,  
 Has found thee still so constant, so sincere,  
 So wise, so brave, so generous, so humane,  
 So well attemper'd, and so fitly turn'd  
 For what is either great or good in life,  
 As casts distinguish'd honour on thy country;  
 And cannot but endear thee to the *Romans*.  
 For me, I think my labours all repaid,  
 My wars in *Afric*. *Masiniſſa*'s friendship  
 Smiles at my soul. Be that my dearest triumph,  
 To have assisted thy forlorn estate,  
 And lent a happy hand in raising thee  
 To thy paternal throne, usurp'd by *Syphax*.  
 The greatest service could be done my country,  
 Distracted *Afric*, and Mankind in general,  
 Was aiding sure thy cause. To put the power,

The public power, into the good man's hand,  
Is giving plenty, life, and joy to millions.

But has my friend, since late we parted armies;  
Since he with *Lælius* acted such a brave,  
Auspicious part against the common foe;  
Has he been blameless quite? has he consider'd,  
How pleasure often on the youthful heart,  
Beneath the rosy soft disguise of love;  
(All sweetness, smiles, and seeming innocence)  
Steals unperceiv'd, and lays the victor low?  
I would not, cannot, put thee to the pain——  
——It pains me deeper——of the least reproach.——  
Let thy too faithful memory supply  
The rest.

[*Pausing.*]

Thy silence, that dejected look,  
That honest colour flushing o'er thy cheek,  
Impart thy better soul.

*Maf.* Oh my good lord!

Oh *Scipio*! Love has seiz'd me, tyrant love  
Inthrals my soul. I am undone by love!

*Scip.* And art thou then to ruin reconcil'd?  
Tam'd to destruction? Wilt thou be undone?  
Resign the towering thought? the vast design,  
With future glories big? the warrior's wreath?  
The glittering files? the trumpets sprightly clang?  
The praise of senates? an applauding world?  
The patriot's statue, and the heroes triumph?  
All for a sigh? all for a soft embrace?  
For a gay transient fancy, *Masiniſſa*?  
For shame, my friend! for honour's sake, for glory!  
Sit not with folded arms, despairing, weak,  
And careless all, till certain ruin comes:  
Like a sick virgin fighting to the gale,  
Unconquerable love!

*Maf.* How chang'd indeed!

The time has been, when, fir'd from *Scipio*'s tongue,  
My soul had mounted in a flame with his.——  
Where is ambition flown? Hopeless attempt!  
Can love like mine be quell'd? Can I forget  
What still possesses, charms my thoughts for ever  
Throw scornful from me what I hold most dear? Not

Not feel the force of excellence? To joy  
Be dead? And undelighted with delight?  
Soft, let me think a moment — no! no! no! —  
I am unequal to thy virtue, *Scipio*!

*Scip.* Fie, *Masiniſſa*, fie! By heavens! I blush  
At thy dejection, this degenerate language.  
What! perish for a woman! Ruin all,  
All the fair deeds which an admiring world  
Hopes from thy rising day; only to sooth  
A stubborn fancy, a luxurious will?

How must it, think you, sound in future story?  
Young *Masiniſſa* was a virtuous prince,  
And *Afric* smil'd beneath his early ray?  
But that a *Carthaginian* captive came,  
By whom untimely in the common fate  
Of love he fell. The wise will scorn the page,  
And all thy praise be some fond maid exclaiming,  
Where are those lovers now? — O rather, rather,  
Had I ne'er seen the vital light of heaven,  
Than like the vulgar live, and like them die!  
Ambition sickens at the very thought. —  
To puff, and bustle here from day to day,  
Lost in the passions of inglorious life,  
Joys which the careless brutes possess above us.  
And when some years, each duller than another,  
Are thus elaps'd, in nauseous pangs to die;  
And pass away, like those forgotten things,  
That soon become as they had never been.

*Mas.* And am I dead to this?

*Scip.* The gods, young man,  
Who train up heroes in misfortune's school,  
Have shook thee with adversity, with each  
Illustrious evil, that can raise, expand,  
And fortify the mind. Thy rooted worth  
Has stood these wintry blasts; grown stronger by them.  
Shall then in prosperous times, while all is mild,  
All vernal, fair; and glory blows around thee;  
Shall then the dead *Serene* of pleasure come,  
And lay thy faded honours in the dust?

*Mas.* O gentle *Scipio*! spare me, spare my weakness.

*Scip.*

*Scip.* Remember *Hannibal* — A signal proof,  
 A fresh example of destructive pleasure.  
 He was the dread of nations, once of *Rome*!  
 When from *Bellona's* bosom, nurs'd in camps,  
 And hard with toil, he down the rugged *Alps*  
 Rush'd in a torrent over *Italy*;  
 Unconquer'd, till the loose delights of *Capua*  
 Sunk his victorious arm, his genius broke,  
 Perfum'd, and made a lover of the heroe.  
 And now he droops in *Bruttium*, fear'd no more,  
 Sinks on our borders like a scatter'd storm.  
 Remember him ; and yet resume thy spirit,  
 Ere it is quite dissolv'd.

*Mas.* Shall *Scipio* stoop,  
 Thus to regard, to teach me wisdom thus ;  
 And yet a stupid anguish at my heart  
 Repel whate'er he says ? — But why, my lord,  
 Why should we kill the best of passions, love ?  
 It aids the heroe, bids ambition rise,  
 Turns us to please, inspires immortal deeds,  
 Even softens brutes, and makes the good more good.

*Scip.* There is a holy tenderness indeed,  
 A nameless sympathy, a fountain-love ;  
 Branch'd infinite from parents to their children,  
 From child to child, from kindred on to kindred,  
 In various streams, from citizen to citizen,  
 From friend to friend, from man to man in general ;  
 That binds, supports, and sweetens human life.  
 But is thy passion such ? — List, *Masiniſſa*,  
 While I the hardest office of a friend  
 Discharge ; and, with a necessary hand,  
 A hand tho' harsh at present really tender,  
 I paint this passion. And if then thou still  
 Art bent to sooth it, I must sighing leave thee,  
 To what the Gods think fit.

*Mas.* O never, *Scipio*!  
 O never leave me to my self ! Speak on.  
 I dread, and yet desire thy friendly hand.

*Scip.* I hope that *Masiniſſa* need not now  
 Be told, how much his happiness is mine ;

With

With what a warm benevolence I'd spring  
 To raise, confirm it, to prevent his wishes,  
 O' luxury to think! — But while he rages,  
 Burns in a fever, shall I let him quaff  
 Delicious poison for a cooling draught,  
 In foolish pity to his thirst? shall I  
 Let a swift flame consume him as he sleeps,  
 Because his dreams are gay? shall I indulge  
 A frenzy flash'd from an infectious eye?  
 A sudden impulse unprov'd by reason?  
 Nay by thy cool deliberate thought condemn'd?  
 Resolv'd against? — A passion for a woman,  
 Who has abus'd thee basely? left thy youth,  
 Thy love as sweet as tender as the spring,  
 The blooming hero for the hoary tyrant?  
 And now who makes thy sheltering arms alone  
 Her last retreat, to save her from the vengeance,  
 Which even her very perfidy to thee  
 Has brought upon her head? — Nor is this all. —  
 A woman who will ply her deepest arts,  
 (Ah too prevailing, as appears already)  
 Will never rest, till 'yphax' fate is thine;  
 Till friendship weeping flies; we join no more  
 In glorious deeds, and thou fall off from Rome?  
 I too could add, that there is something mean,  
 Inhuman in thy passion. Does not Syphax,  
 While thou rejoicest, die? The generous heart  
 Should scorn a pleasure which gives others pain.  
 If this, my friend, all this consider'd deep,  
 Alarm thee not, not rouse thy resolution,  
 And call the hero from his wanton slumber,  
 Then *Masiniissa's* lost.

*Mas.* Oh, I am pierc'd!

In every thought am pierc'd! 'Tis all too true. —  
 I wish I could refuse it. — Whither, whither,  
 Thro' what enchanted wilds have I been wandering?  
 They seem'd *Elysium*, the delightful plains,  
 The happy groves of heroes and of lovers:  
 But the divinity that breathes in thee  
 Has broke the charm, and I am in a desert;

Far

Far from the land of peace. It was but lately  
 That a pure joyous calm o'erspread my soul,  
 And reason tun'd my passions into bliss;  
 When love came hurrying in, and with rash hand,  
 Mix'd them delirious, till they now ferment  
 To misery. — There is no reasoning down  
 This deep, deep anguish! this continual pang!  
 A thousand things! when'er my raptur'd thought  
 Runs back a little — But I will not think. —  
 And yet I must — Oh Gods! that I could lose  
 What a fond few hours memory has grav'd  
 On adamant.

*Scip.* But one strong effort more,  
 And the fair field is thine — A conquest far  
 Excelling that o'er *Syphax*. What remains,  
 Since now thy madness to thy self appears,  
 But an immediate manly resolution,  
 To shake off this effeminate disease;  
 These soft ideas, which seduce thy soul,  
 Make it all idle, un aspiring, weak,  
 A scene of dreams, to puff them to the winds;  
 And be my former friend, thy self again?

I joy to find thee touch'd by generous motives;  
 And that I need not bid thee recollect,  
 Whose awful property thou hast usurp'd;  
 Need not assure thee, that the *Roman* people,  
 The senators of *Rome*, will never suffer  
 A dangerous woman, their devoted foe,  
 A woman, whose irrefragable spirit  
 Has in great part sustain'd this bloody war,  
 Whose charms corrupted *Syphax* from their side,  
 And fir'd embattled nations into rage;  
 Will never suffer her, when gain'd so dear,  
 To ruin thee too, taint thy faithful breast,  
 And kindle future war. No, fate it self  
 Is not more steady to the right than they.  
 And, where the public good but seems concern'd,  
 No motive their impenetrable hearts,  
 Nor fear nor tenderness, can touch: such is  
 The spirit, that has rais'd *Imperial Rome*.

*Maf.*



*Mas.* Ah killing truth! — But I have promis'd, *Scipio!*  
 Have sworn to save her from the *Roman* power.  
 My plighted faith is pass'd, my hand is given.  
 And, by the conscious gods! who mark'd my vows,  
 The whole united world shall never have her.  
 For I will die a thousand thousand deaths,  
 With all *Massylia* in one field expire;  
 Ere to the lowliest wretch, much more to her  
 I love, to *Sophonisba*, to my queen,  
 I violate my word.

*Scip.* My heart approves  
 Thy resolution, thy determin'd honour.  
 For ever sacred be thy word, and oath.  
 Virtue by virtue will alone be clear'd,  
 And scorns the crooked methods of dishonour;  
 But, thus divided, how to keep thy faith  
 At once to *Rome* and *Sophonisba*; how  
 To save her from our chains, and yet thyself  
 From greater bondage; this thy secret thought  
 Can best inform thee.

*Mas.* Agony! Distraction!  
 These wilful tears! — O look not on me, *Scipio!*  
 For I'm a child again.

*Scip.* Thy tears are no reproach.  
 Tears oft look graceful on the manly cheek.  
 The Cruel cannot weep. Even Friendship's eye  
 Gives thee the drop it would refuse itself.  
 I know 'tis hard, wounds every bleeding nerve  
 About thy heart, thus to tear off thy passion.  
 But for that very reason, *Masiniſſa*,  
 'Tis hop'd from thee. The harder, thence results  
 The greater glory. — Why should we pretend  
 To conquer, rule mankind, be first in power,  
 In great assemblies, honour, place, and pleasure,  
 While slaves at heart? while by fantastick turns  
 Our frantic passions rage? The very thought  
 Should turn our pomp to shame, our sweet to bitter;  
 And, when the shouts of millions meet our ears,  
 Whisper reproach. — O ye celestial powers!  
 What is it, in a torrent of success,

No bear down nations, and o'er-flow the world?  
 All your peculiar favour. Real glory  
 Springs from the silent conquest of ourselves;  
 And without that the conqueror is nought  
 Save the first slave.—Then rouse thee, *Masinissa*!  
 Nor in one weakness all thy virtues lose;  
 And oh beware of long, or vain repentance!

*Mas.* Well! well! no more.—It is but dying too!

S C E N E I I.

*Scipio alone.*

I wish I have not urg'd the truth to rigour!  
 There is a time when virtue grows severe,  
 Too much for nature, and even almost cruel.

S C E N E I V.

*Scipio, Lælius.*

*Sci.* Poor *Masinissa*, *Lælius*, is undone;  
 Betwixt his passion and his reason tost  
 In miserable conflict.

*Læ.* Entering, *Scipio*,

He shot athwart me, nor vouchsaf'd one look.  
 Hung on his clouded brow I mark'd despair,  
 And his eye glaring with some dire resolve.  
 Fast o'er his cheek too ran the hasty tear.  
 It were great pity that he should be lost!

*Scip.* By heavens! to lose him were a shock, as if  
 I lost thee, *Lælius*, lost my dearest brother,  
 Bound up in friendship from our infant years.  
 A thousand lovely qualities endear him,  
 Only too warm of heart.

*Læ.* What shall be done?

*Scip.* Here let rest, till time abates his passion.  
 Nature is nature, *Lælius*. let the wise  
 Say what they please. But now perhaps he dies—  
 Haste! haste! and give him hope—I have not time  
 To tell thee what.—Thy prudence will direct—  
 Whatever is consistent with my honour,  
 My duty to the publick, and my friendship  
 To him himself, say, promise, shall be done:  
 I hope returning reason will prevent  
 Our farther care.

*Læ.*

*Lal.* I fly with joy.

*Scip.* His life

Not only save, but *Sophonisba's* too:  
For both I fear are in this passion mixt.

*Lal.* It shall be done.

## S C E N E V.

*Scipio alone.*

If friendship pierces thus,  
When love pours in his added violence,  
What are the pangs which *Masiniſſa* feels!

## S C E N E VI.

*Sophonisba, Phœniſſa.*

*Soph.* Yes, *Masiniſſa* loves me—Heavens! how fond!  
But yet I know not what hangs on my spirit,  
A dismal boding; for this fatal *Scipio*,  
I dread his virtues, this prevailing *Roman*,  
Even now perhaps deludes the generous king,  
Fires his ambition with mistaken glory,  
Demands me from him; for full well he knows;  
That, while I live, I must intend their ruin.

*Phœ.* Madam, these fears——

*Soph.* And yet it cannot be.

Can *Scipio*, whom even hostile fame proclaims  
Of perfect honour, and of polish'd manners,  
Smooth, artful, winning, moderate, and wise;  
Make such a wild demand? Or, if he could,  
Can *Masiniſſa* grant it? give his queen,  
Whom love and honour bind him to protect,  
Yield her a captive to triumphant *Rome*?  
'Tis baseness to suspect it; 'tis inhuman.

What then remains?—Suppose they should resolve  
By right of war to seize me for their Prize.  
Ay, there it kills!—What can his single arm,  
Against the *Roman* power? that very power  
By which he stands restor'd? Distracting thought!  
Still e'er my head the rod of bondage hangs.  
Shame on my weakness!—This poor catching hope,  
This transient taste of joy, will only more  
Imbitter death.

*Phœ.*

*Phæ.* A moment will decide.  
Madam, till then——

*Soph.* Would I had dy'd before!  
And am I dreaming here? Here from the *Romans*  
Beseeching I may live to swell their triumph?  
When my free spirit should ere now have join'd  
That great assembly, those devoted shades,  
Who scorn'd to live till liberty was lost.  
But ere their country fell, abhorr'd the light.

Whence this pale slave? he trembles with his message.

SCENE VII.

*Sophonisba, Phœnissa; and to them a Slave, with letter  
and Poison from Masinissa.*

*Slave kneeling.]* This, Madam, from the King, and this.

*Soph.* Ha! — Stay. *[Reads the Letter.]*

Rejoice, *Phœnissa*! Give me joy, my friend!  
For here is liberty! My tears are air!  
The hand of *Rome* can never touch me more!  
Hail! perfect freedom, hail!

*Phæ.* How? what? my Queen!  
Ah what is this? *[Pointing to the Poison.]*

*Soph.* The first of blessings, death.

*Phæ.* Alas! alas! can I rejoice in that?

*Soph.* Shift not thy colour at the sound of death;  
For death appears not in a dreary light,  
Seem not a blank to me; a losing all  
Those fond sensations, those enchanting dreams;  
Which cheat a toiling world from day to day,  
And form the whole of happiness they know.  
It is to me perfection, glory, triumph.  
Nay fondly would I chuse it, tho' persuaded  
It were a long dark night without a morning,  
To bondage far prefer it! since it is  
Deliverance from a world where *Romans* rule;  
Where violence prevails— And timely too—  
Before my country falls; before I feel  
As many stripes, as many chains, and deaths,  
As there are lives in *Carthage*.— Glorious charter!  
By which I hold immortal life and freedom,  
Come, let me read thee once again.— And then,

# S O P H O N I S B A. 37

To thy great purpose.

*[Reads the letter aloud.*

*Masiniſſa to his Queen.*

*The Gods know with what pleaſure I would have kept my faith to Sophonisba in another manner. But ſince this fatal bowl can alone deliver thee from the Romans? Call to mind thy father, thy country, that thou haſt been the wife of two kings; and act up to the dictates of thy own heart. I will not long ſurvive thee.*

Oh, 'tis wondrous well!

Ye Gods of death! who rule the Stygian gloom,

Ye who have greatly dy'd! I come! I come!

I die contented, ſince I die a queen;

By Rome untouch'd, unſullied by their power;

So much their terror that I muſt not live.

And thou, go tell the king, if this is all

The nuptial preſent he can ſend his bride,

I thank him for it.—But that death had worn

An eaſier face before I truſted him.

His poiſon, tell him too, he might have ſpar'd,

Theſe times may want it for himſelf, and I

Live not of ſuch a cordial unprovided.

Add, hither had he come, I could have taught

Him how to die.—I linger not, remember,

I ſtand not ſhivering on the brink of life;

And, but theſe votive drops, which grateful thus

*[taking them from the poiſon.*

To Jove the high Deliverer I ſhed,

Aſſure him that I drank it, drank it all,

With an unalter'd ſmile ——— Away.

*[Drinks.*

## S C E N E VIII.

Sophonisba, Phœniſſa.

*Soph.* My friend!

In tears, my friend! Diſhonour not my death

With womanish complaints. Weep not for me,

Weep for thy ſelf, Phœniſſa, for thy country,

But not for me. There is a certain hour,

Which one would wiſh all undiſturb'd and bright,

No care, no ſorrow, no dejected paſſions,

And that is when we die; when hence we go,

Ne'er to be ſeen again; then let us ſpread

E

A

A bold exalted wing, and the last voice  
We hear be that of wonder and applause.

*Phœ* Who with the patriot wishes not to die!

*Soph.* And is the sacred moment then so near?

The moment, when yon sun, those heavens, this earth  
Hateful to me, polluted by the *Romans*,

And all the busy slavish race of men,

Shall sink at once; and strait another state,

New scenes, new joys, new faculties, new wonders,

Rise on a sudden round: but this the Gods

In clouds and horror wrap, or none would live!

How liberal is Death!—Methinks, I seem

To touch the happy shore.—Behind me frowns

A stormy sea, with tossing mortals thick;

While, unconfin'd and green, before me lies

The land of bliss, and everlasting freedom:

Where walk the mighty dead; all of one mind,

One blooming smile, one language, and one country,

Oh to be there!—my breast begins to burn;

My tainted heart grows sick.—Ah me! *Phœnissa*,

How many virgins, infants, tender wretches,

Must feel these pangs, ere *Carthage* is no more!

Soft—lead me to my couch—My shivering Limbs  
Do this last office, and then rest for ever.

I pray thee weep not, pierce me not with groans.

The king too here.—Nay then my death is full!

#### S C E N E IX.

*Sophonisba*, *Phœnissa*, *Masiniſſa*, *Lælius*, *Narva*,

*Mas.* Has *Sophonisba* drank this cursed bowl?

O horror! horror! what a sight is here!

*Soph.* Had I not drank, *Masiniſſa*, then,  
I had deserv'd it.

*Mas.* Exquisite distress!

Oh bitter, bitter fate! And this last hope  
Compleats my woe.

*Sop.* When will these ears be deaf,  
To misery's complaints? These eyes be blind,  
To mischief wrought by *Rome*?

*Mas.* Too soon! too soon!—

Ah, why so hasty? But a little while,

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Hadst thou delay'd this horrid draught; I then  
Had been as happy, as I now am wretched!

*Sop.* What means this talk of hope? of coward waiting?

*Mas.* What have I done? Oh heavens! I cannot think  
Without distraction, hell, and burning anguish,  
On my rash deed!—But, while I talk, she dies!  
And how? what? where am I then?—Say, canst thou  
Forgive me, *Sophonisba*?

*Sop.* Yes, and more,  
More than forgive thee, thank thee, *Masnissa*.  
Hadst thou been weak, and dally'd with my freedom,  
'Till by proud *Rome* enslav'd; that injury  
I never had forgiven.

*Mas.* I came with life!  
*Lalius* and I from *Scipio* hasted hither;  
But death was here before us—this vile poison!

*Soph.* With life!—There was some merit in the poison;  
But this destroys it all.—And couldst thou think  
Me mean enough to take it?—Oh! *Phænissa*,  
This mortal toil is almost at an end.—  
Receive my parting soul.

*Phæ.* Alas, my queen!

*Mas.* Dies! dies! and scorns me!—Mercy! *Sophonisba*!  
Grant one forgiving look, while yet thou canst;  
Or death itself, the grave cannot relieve me:  
But, with the furies join'd, my frantic ghost  
Will howl for ever.—Quivering! and pale!  
Have I done this?

*Soph.* Come nearer, *Masnissa*,——  
Out! stubborn nature!——

*Mas.* Misery! these pangs  
To me transferr'd were ease.—A moment only!  
An agonizing moment! while I have  
An age of things to say!

*Soph.* We, but for *Rome*,  
Might have been happy.—Rouse thee now, my soul!  
The cold deliverer comes.—Be mild to *Syphax*——  
In my surviving friend behold me still.  
Farewel!—'Tis done! O never, never, *Carthage*,  
Shall I behold thee more! (Dies.)

*Mas.* Dead! dead! oh dead!  
Is there no death for me?

[*Snatches Lælius's sword to stab himself.*

*Læ.* Hold, *Masiniſſa*!

*Mas.* And wouldst thou make a coward of me, *Lælius*?  
Have me survive that murder'd excellence?

Did she not die? Ha! Who has shock'd my brain!  
It whirls, it blazes.— Was it thou, old man?

*Narr.* Alas, alas!— good *Masiniſſa*, softly!  
Let me conduct thee to thy couch.

*Mas.* The grave

Were welcome — But ye cannot make me live!  
Oppress'd with life! — Off! — crowd not thus around me!  
For I will hear, see, think no more! — Thou sun,  
Keep up thy hated beams! And all I want  
Of thee, kind earth, is an immediate grave!

Ay, there she lies! — Why to that pallid sweetness  
Cannot I, Nature! lay my lips, and die!

[*Throws himself beside her.*

*Læ.* See there the ruins of the noble mind,  
When from calm reason passion tears the sway.  
What pity she should perish! — Cruel war,  
'Tis not the least misfortune in thy train,  
That oft by thee the brave destroy the brave.  
She had a *Roman* soul; for every one  
Who loves, like her, his country is a *Roman*.

Whether on *Afric's* sandy plains he glows,  
Or lives untam'd among *Riphaean* inows.  
If parent-liberty the breast inflame,  
The gloomy *Libyan* then deserves that name:  
And, warm with freedom, under frozen skies,  
In farthest *Britain* *Romans* yet may rise.



# EPILOGUE.

By a FRIEND.

Spoken by Mrs. CIBBER.

**N**OW, I'm afraid, the modest taste in vogue  
Demands a strong, high-season'd epilogue,  
Else might some silly soul take pity's part,  
And odious virtue sink into the heart.

Our squeamish author scruples this proceeding;  
He says it hurts sound morals, and good breeding:  
Nor Sophonisba would he here produce,  
A glaring model, of no private use.  
Ladies, he bid me say, behold your Cato,  
What tho' no Stoic she, nor read in Plato?  
Yet sure she offer'd, for her country's sake,  
A sacrifice, which Cato could not make—  
— Already, now, these wicked men are sneering,  
Some wresting what one says, and others leering.  
I vow they have not strength for—public spirit,  
That, ladies, must be your superior merit.

Mercy forbid! we should lay down our lives;  
Like these old, Punic, barbarous, heathen wives.  
Spare christian blood.—But sure the devil's in her,  
Who for her country would not lose a pinner.  
—Lard! how could such a creature shew her face?  
How?—Just as you do there—thro' Brussels Lace,

The

## EPILOGUE.

*The Roman fair, the public in distress,  
Gave up the dearest ornaments of dress.  
How much more cheaply might you gain applause?  
—One yard of Ribban, and two ells of Gause.  
And Gause each deep-read critic must adore;  
Your Roman ladies dress'd in Gause all o'er.  
Should you, fair patriots, come to dress so thin;  
How clear might all your — sentiments be seen.  
To foreign looms no longer owe your charms;  
Nor make their trade more fatal than their arms.  
Each British dame, who courts her country's praise,  
By quitting these outlandish modes, might raise  
(Not from yon powder'd band, so thin, and spruce)  
Ten able-bodied men, for — public use.*

*But now a serious word about the play. —  
Auspicious smile on this his first essay,  
Ye generous Britons! your own sons inspire;  
Let your applauses fan their native fire.  
Then other Shakespears yet may rouse the stage,  
And other Otways melt another age.*

F I N I S.





*A N U P T I A L S O N G, intended to have  
been inserted in the Fourth Act.*

C O M E, gentle *Venus*! and assuage  
A warring world, a bleeding age.  
For nature lives beneath thy ray,  
The wintry tempests haste away,  
A lucid calm invests the sea,  
Thy native deep is full of thee;  
And flowering earth, where'er you fly,  
Is all o'er spring, all sun the sky.  
A genial spirit warms the breeze;  
Unseen, among the blooming trees,  
The feather'd 'over's tune their throat,  
The desert growls a soften'd note,  
Glad o'er the meads the cattle bound,  
And love and harmony go round.

But chief, into the human heart  
You strike the dear delicious dart;  
You teach us pleasing pangs to know,  
To languish in luxurious woe,  
To feel the generous passions rise,  
Grow good by gazing, mild by sighs;  
Each happy moment to improve,  
And fill the perfect year with love.

Come, thou delight of heaven and earth!  
To whom all creatures owe their birth;  
Oh come, red-smiling! tender, come!  
And yet prevent our final doom.  
For long the furious god of war  
Has crush'd us with his iron car,

Has rag'd along our ruin'd plains,  
 Has curs'd them with his cruel stains,  
 Has clos'd our youth in endless sleep,  
 And made the widow'd virgin weep.  
 Now let him feel thy wonted charms;  
 Oh take him to thy twining arms!  
 And, while thy bosom heaves on his,  
 While deep he prints the humid kiss,  
 Ah then! his stormy heart controul,  
 And sigh thy self into his soul.

Thy son too, *Cupid*, we implore,  
 To leave the green *Idalian* shore;  
 Be he, sweet god! our only fee;  
 Long let him draw the twanging bow,  
 Transfix us with his golden darts,  
 Pour all his quiver on our hearts,  
 With gentler anguish make us sigh,  
 And teach us sweeter deaths to die.

